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**THE TUDOR
TRANSLATIONS**

**EDITED BY
W. E. HENLEY**

XLIII

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THE
DECAMERON

PRESERVED TO POSTERITY BY
GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

AND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
ANNO 1620

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
EDWARD HUTTON

VOLUME III



L O N D O N
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THE INDUCTION



NOW began the Sunne to dart forth his golden beames, when Madam Fiammetta (incited by the sweete singing Birdes, which since the breake of day, sat merrily chanting on the trees) arose from her bed: as all the other Ladies likewise did, and the three young Gentlemen descending downe into the fields, where they walked in a gentle pace on the greene grasse, untill the Sunne were risen a little higher. On many pleasant matters they conferred together, as they walked in severall companies, till at the length the Queene, finding the heate to enlarge it selfe strongly, returned backe to the Castle; where when they were all arrived, she commanded, that after this mornings walking, their stomackes should be refreshed with wholsom Wines, as also divers sorts of banquetting stuffe. Afterward, they all repaired into the Garden, not departing thence, untill the houre of dinner was come: at which time, the Master of the houshold,

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THE IN- having prepared every thing in decent readinesse, after a
DUCTION solemne song was sung, by order from the Queene, they
were seated at the Table.

When they had dined, to their owne liking and contentment, they began (in continuation of their former order) to exercise divers dances, and afterward voyces to their instruments, and many pretty Madrigals and Roundelays. Upon the finishing of these delights, the Queene gave them leave to take their rest, when such as were so minded, went to sleep, others solaced themselves in the Garden. But after midday was overpast, they met (according to their wonted manner) and as the Queene had commanded, at the faire Fountaine; where she being placed in her seate royall, and casting her eye upon Pamphilus, she bad him begin the dayes discourses, of happy successe in love, after disastrous and troublesome accidents; who yeelding thereto with humble reverence, thus began.

Many Novels (gracious Ladies) do offer themselves to my memory, wherewith to beginne so pleasant a day, as it is her Highnesse desire that this should be: among which plenty, I esteeme one above all the rest, because you may comprehend thereby, not onely the fortunate conclusion, wherewith we intend to begin our day; but also, how mighty the forces of Love are, deserving to be both admired and revered. Albeit there are many, who scarcely knowing what they say, do condemne them with infinite grosse imputations: which I purpose to disprove, and (I hope) to your no little pleasing.

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Chynon, by falling in Love, became wise, and by force of Armes, winning his faire Lady Iphigenia on the Seas, was afterward imprisoned at Rhodes. Being delivered by one named Lysimachus, with him he recovered his Iphigenia againe, and faire Cassandra, even in the midst of their marriage. They fled with them into Candye, where after they had married them, they were called home to their owne dwelling.

THE FIRST NOVELL

Whereby is approved, that Love (oftentimes) maketh a man both wise and valiant.

ACCORDING to the ancient Annales of the Cypriots, there sometime lived in Cyprus, a Noble Gentleman, who was commonly called Aristippus, and exceeded all other of the Country in the goods of Fortune. Divers children he had, but (amongst the rest) a Sonne, in whose birth he was more infortunate then any of the rest; and continually greeved, in regard, that having all the compleate perfections of beauty, good forme, and manly parts, surpassing all other youths of his age or stature, yet hee wanted the reall ornament of the soule, reason and judgement; being (indeed a meere Ideot or Foole,) and no better hope to be expected of him. His true name, according as he received it by Baptisme, was Galesus, but because neyther by the laborious paines of his Tutors indulgence, and faire endeavour of his parents, or ingenuity of any other, he could not be brought to civility of life, understanding of Letters, or common carriage of a reasonable creature: by his grosse and deformed kinde of speech, his qualities also savouring rather of brutish breeding, then

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any way derived from manly education; as an Epithite of scorne and derision, generally, they gave him the name of Chynon, which in their native Countrey language, and divers other beside, signifieth a very Sot or Foole, and so was he termed by every one.

This lost kinde of life in him, was no meane burthen of greefe unto his Noble Father, and all hope being already spent, of any future happy recovery, he gave command (because he would not alwaies have such a sorrow in his sight) that he should live at a Farme of his owne in a Country Village, among his Peazants and Plough-Swaines. Which was not any way distastefull to Chynon, but well agreed with his owne naturall disposition; for their rurall qualities, and grosse behaviour pleased him beyond the Cities civility. Chynon living thus at his Fathers Countrey Village, exercising nothing else but rurall demeanour, such as then delighted him above all other: it chanced upon a day about the houre of noone, as hee was walking over the fields, with a long staffe on his necke, which commonly he used to carry; he entred in to a small thicket, reputed the goodliest in all those quarters, and by reason it was then the month of May, the Trees had their leaves fairely shot forth.

When he had walked through the thicket, it came to passe, that (even as good Fortune guided him) hee came into a faire Meadow, on every side engirt with Trees, and in one corner thereof stode a goodly Fountaine, whose current was both coole and cleare. Hard by it, upon the greene grasse, he espied a very beautifull young Damosell, seeming to be fast asleepe, attired in such fine loose garments, as hidde very little of her white body: onely from the girdle downward, she ware a kirtle made close unto her, of interwoven delicate silke; and at her feete lay two other Damosels sleeping, and a servant in the same manner. No sooner had Chynon fixed his eye upon her, but he stood leaning upon his staffe; and viewed her very advisedly, without speaking a word, and in no meane admiration, as if he had never seene the forme of a woman

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before. He began then to feele in his harsh rurall understanding (whereinto never till now, either by painfull instruction, or all other good meanes used to him, any honest civility had power of impression) a strange kinde of humour to awake, which informed his grosse and dull spirite, that this Damosell was the very fairest, which ever any living man beheld.

Then he began to distinguish her parts, commending the tresses of her haire, which he imagined to be of gold; her forehead, nose, mouth, necke, armes, but (above all) her brests, appearing (as yet) but onely to shew themselves, like two little mountaines. So that, of a fielden clownish lout, he would needs now become a judge of beauty, coveting earnestly in his soule, to see her eyes, which were veiled over with sound sleepe, that kept them fast enclosed together, and onely to looke on them, hee wished a thousand times, that she would awake. For, in his judgement, she excelled all the women that ever he had seene, and doubted, whether she were some Goddesse or no; so strangely was he metamorphosed from folly, to a sensible apprehension, more then common. And so farre did this sodaine knowledge in him extend; that he could conceive of divine and celestiaall things, and that they were more to be admired and revered, then those of humane or terrene consideration; wherefore the more gladly he contented himselfe, to tarry till she awaked of her owne accord. And although the time of stay seemed tedious to him, yet notwithstanding, he was overcome with such extraordinary contentment, as he had no power to depart thence, but stood as if he had bin glued fast to the ground.

After some indifferent respite of time, it chanced that the young Damosel (who was named Iphigenia) awaked before any of the other with her, and lifted up her head, with her eyes wide open, she saw Chynon standing before her, leaning still on his staffe; whereat marvailing not a little, she saide unto him: Chynon, whither wanderest thou, or what dost thou seeke for in this wood? Chynon, who not onely by his countenance but likewise his folly,

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NOVELL I Nobility of birth, and wealthy possessions of his father, was generally knowne throughout the Countrey, made no answere at all to the demand of Iphigenia: but so soone as he beheld her eyes open, he began to observe them with a constant regard, and being perswaded in his soule, that from them flowed such an unutterable singularity, as he had never felt till then. Which the young Gentlewoman well noting, she began to wax fearefull, least these stedfast lookes of his, should incite his rusticity to some attempt, which might redound to her dishonour: wherefore awaking her women and servants, and they all being risen, she saide. Farewell Chynon, I leave thee to thine owne good Fortune; whereto hee presently replyed, saying: I will go with you. Now, although the Gentlewoman refused his company, as dreading some acte of incivility from him: yet could she not devise any way to be rid of him, till he had brought her to her owne dwelling, where taking leave mannerly of her, he went directly home to his Fathers house, saying: Nothing should compell him to live any longer in the muddy Country. And albeit his Father was much offended hereat, and all the rest of his kindred and friends: (yet not knowing how to helpe it) they suffered him to continue there still, expecting the cause of this his so sodaine alteration, from the course of life, which contented him so highly before.

Chynon being now wounded to the heart (where never any civill instruction could before get entrance) with loves piercing dart, by the bright beauty of Iphigenia, mooved much admiration (falling from one change to another) in his Father, Kindred, and all else that knew him. For first, he requested of his Father, that he might be habited and respected like to his other Brethren, whereto right gladly he condescended. And frequenting the company of civill youths, observing also the cariage of Gentlemen, especially such as were amorously enclined: he grew to a beginning in short time (to the wonder of every one) not onely to understand the first instruction of letters, but also became most skilfull, even amongst them that were best exercised

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in Philosophy. And afterward, love to Iphigenia being the sole occasion of this happy alteration, not onely did his harsh and clownish voyce convert it selfe more mildely, but also hee became a singular Musitian, and could perfectly play on any instrument. Beside, he tooke delight in the riding and managing of great horses, and finding himselfe of a strong and able body, he exercised all kinds of Military Disciplines, as well by Sea, as on the land. And, to be breefe, because I would not seeme tedious in the repetition of all his vertues, scarsly had he attained to the fourth yeare, after he was thus falne in love, but hee became generally knowne, to be the most civill, wise, and worthy Gentleman, aswell for all vertues enriching the minde, as any whatsoever to beautifie the body, that very hardly he could be equalled throughout the whole kingdome of Cyprus.

What shall we say then (vertuous Ladies) concerning this Chynon? Surely nothing else, but that those high and divine vertues, infused into his gentle soule, were by envious Fortune bound and shut up in some small angle of his intellect, which being shaken and set at liberty by love, (as having a farre more potent power then Fortune, in quickning and reviving the dull drowsie spirits) declared his mighty and soveraigne Authority, in setting free so many faire and precious vertues unjustly detayned, to let the worlds eye behold them truly, by manifest testimony from whence he can deliver those spirits subjected to his power, and guid them (afterward) to the highest degrees of honour. And although Chynon by affecting Iphigenia, failed in some particular things; yet notwithstanding, his Father Aristippus duely considering, that love had made him a man, whereas (before) he was no better then a beast: not onely endured all patiently, but also advised him therein, to take such courses as best liked himselfe. Nevertheless, Chynon (who refused to be called Galesus, which was his naturall name indeed) remembring that Iphigenia tearmed him Chynon, and coveting (under this title) to accomplish the issue of his honest amorous desire: made

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many motions to Ciphæus the Father of Iphigenia, that he would be pleased to let him enjoy her in marriage. But Ciphæus told him, that he had already passed his promise for her, to a Gentleman of Rhodes, named Pasimondo, which promise he religiously intended to performe.

The time being come, which was concluded on for Iphigeniaes marriage, in regard that the affianced husband had sent for her: Chynon thus communed with his owne thoughts. Now is the time (quoth he) to let my divine Mistresse see, how truly and honourably I doe affect her, because (by her) I am become a man. But if I could be possessed of her, I should growe more glorious, then the common condition of a mortall man, and have her I will, or loose my life in the adventure. Being thus resolved, he prevailed with divers young Gentlemen his friends, making them of his faction, and secretly prepared a Shippe, furnished with all things for a Navall fight, setting sodainly forth to Sea, and hulling abroad in those parts by which the vessell should passe, that must convey Iphigenia to Rhodes to her husband. After many honours done to them, who were to transport her thence unto Rhodes, being imbarked, they set saile upon their Bon viaggio.

Chynon, who slept not in a businesse so earnestly importing him, set on them (the day following) with his Ship, and standing aloft on the decke, cryed out to them that had the charge of Iphigenia, saying. Strike your sayles, or else determine to be sunke in the Sea. The enemies to Chynon, being nothing danted with his words, prepared to stand upon their owne defence; which made Chynon, after the former speeches delivered, and no answer returned, to command the grapling Irons to be cast forth, which tooke such fast hold on the Rhodians shippe, that (whether they would or no) both the vessels joyned close together. And he shewing himselfe fierce like a Lyon, not tarrying to be seconded by any, stepped aboard the Rhodians ship, as if he made no respect at all of them, and having his sword ready drawne in his hand (incited by the vertue of unfaigned love) laied about him on all sides very manfully.

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Which when the men of Rhodes perceived, casting downe their weapons, and all of them (as it were) with one voyce, yeelded themselves his prisoners: whereupon he said.

Honest Friends, neither desire of booty, nor hatred to you, did occasion my departure from Cyprus, thus to assaile you with drawne weapons: but that which hereto hath most mooved me, is a matter highly importing to me, and very easie for you to grant, and so enjoy your present peace. I desire to have faire Iphigenia from you, whom I love above all other Ladies living, because I could not obtaine her of her father, to make her my lawfull wife in marriage. Love is the ground of my instant Conquest, and I must use you as my mortall enemies, if you stand upon any further tearmes with me, and do not deliver her as mine owne: for your Pasimondo, must not enjoy what is my right, first by vertue of my love, and now by Conquest: Deliver her therefore, and depart hence at your pleasure.

The men of Rhodes, being rather constrained thereto, then of any free disposition in themselves, with teares in their eyes, delivered Iphigenia to Chynon; who beholding her in like manner to weepe, thus spake unto her. Noble Lady, do not any way discomfort your selfe, for I am your Chynon, who have more right and true title to you, and much better doe deserve to enjoy you, by my long continued affection to you, then Pasimondo can any way plead; because you belong to him but onely by promise. So, bringing her aboard his owne ship, where the Gentlemen his companions gave her kinde welcome, without touching any thing else belonging to the Rhodians, he gave them free liberty to depart.

Chynon being more joyfull, by the obtaining of his hearts desire, then any other conquest else in the world could make him, after he had spent some time in comforting Iphigenia, who as yet sate sadly sighing; he consulted with his companions, who joyned with him in opinion, that their safest course was, by no meanes to returne to Cyprus;

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and therefore all (with one consent) resolved to set saile for Candye, where every one made account, but especially Chynon, in regard of ancient and new combined Kindred, as also very intimate friends, to finde very worthy entertainment, and so to continue there safely with Iphigenia. But Fortune, who was so favourable to Chynon, in granting him so pleasing a Conquest, to shew her constancy, so sodainly changed the inestimable joy of our jocond Lover, into as heavy sorrow and disaster. For, foure houres were not fully compleated, since his departure from the Rhodians, but darke night came upon them, and he sitting conversing with his faire Mistresse, in the sweetest solace of his soule; the winds began to blow roughly, the Seas swelled angerly, and a tempest arose impetuously, that no man could see what his duty was to do, in such a great unexpected distresse, nor how to warrant themselves from perishing.

If this accident were displeasing to poore Chynon, I thinke the question were in vaine demanded: for now it seemeth to him, that the Godds had granted his cheefe desire, to the end he should dyc with the greater anguish, in losing both his love and life together. His friends likewise, felte the selfe-same affliction, but especially Iphigenia, who wept and greeved beyond all measure, to see the ship beaten with such stormy billowes, as threatned her sinking every minute. Impatiently she cursed the love of Chynon, greatly blaming his desperate boldnesse, and maintaining, that so violent a tempest could never happen, but onely by the Gods displeasure, who would not permit him to have a wife against their will; and therefore thus punished his proud presumption, not onely in his unavoidable death, but also that her life must perish for company.

She continuing in these wofull lamentations, and the Mariners labouring all in vaine, because the violence of the tempest encreased more and more, so that every moment they expected wracking: they were carried (contrary to their owne knowledge) very neere unto the Isle of Rhodes, which they being no way able to avoyd, and utterly

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ignorant of the Coast; for safety of their lives, they laboured to land there if possibly they might. Wherein Fortune was somewhat furtherous to them, driving them into a small gulfe of the Sea, whereinto (but a little while before) the Rhodians, from whom Chynon had taken Iphigenia, were newly entred with their ship. Nor had they any knowledge each of other, till the breake of day (which made the heavens to looke more clearly) gave them discovery of being within a flight shoote together. Chynon looking forth, and espying the same ship which he had left the day before, hee grew exceeding sorrowfull, as fearing that which after followed, and therefore hee willed the Mariners, to get away from her by all their best endeavour, and let fortune afterward dispose of them as she pleased; for into a worse place they could not come, nor fall into the like danger.

The Mariners employed their very utmost paines, and all proved but losse of time: for the winde was so sterne, and the waves so turbulent, that still they drove them the contrary way: so that striving to get forth of the gulfe, whether they would or no, they were driven on land, and instantly knowne to the Rhodians, whereof they were not a little joyfull. The men of Rhodes being landed, ran presently to the neere-neighbouring Villages, where dwelt divers worthy Gentlemen, to whom they reported the arrivall of Chynon, what fortune befell them at Sea, and that Iphigenia might now be recovered againe with chastisement to Chynon for his bold insolence. They being very joyfull of these good newes, tooke so many men as they could of the same Village, and ran immediately to the Sea side, where Chynon being newly Landed and his people, intending flight into a neere adjoyning Forrest, for defence of himselfe and Iphigenia, they were all taken, led thence to the Village, and afterwards to the chiefe City of Rhodes.

No sooner were they arrived, but Pasimondo, the intended Husband for Iphigenia (who had already heard the tydings) went and complained to the Senate, who appointed a

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NOVELL I Gentleman of Rhodes named Lysimachus, and being that yeere soveraigne Magistrate over the Rhodians, to go well provided for the apprehension of Chynon and his company, committing them to prison, which accordingly was done. In this manner, the poore unfortunate lover Chynon, lost his faire Iphigenia, having won her in so short a while before, and scarcely requited with so much as a kisse. But as for Iphigenia, she was royally welcommed by many Lords and Ladies of Rhodes, who so kindly comforted her, that she soone forgotte all her greefe and trouble on the Sea, remaining in company of those Ladies and Gentlewomen, untill the day determined for her marriage.

At the earnest entreaty of divers Rhodian Gentlemen, who were in the Ship with Iphigenia, and had their lives courteously saved by Chynon : both he and his friends had their lives likewise spared, although Pasimondo laboured importunately, to have them all put to death ; onely they were condemned to perpetuall imprisonment, which (you must thinke) was most greivous to them, as being now hopelesse of any deliverance. But in the meane time, while Pasimondo was ordering his nuptiall preparation, Fortune seeming to repent the wrongs she had done to Chynon, prepared a new accident, whereby to comfort him in this deepe distresse, and in such manner as I will relate unto you.

Pasimondo had a Brother, yonger then he in yeeres, but not a jot inferiour to him in vertue, whose name was Hormisda, and long time the case had bene in question, for his taking to wife a faire young Gentlewoman of Rhodes, called Cassandra ; whom Lysimachus the Governour loved very dearly, and hindred her marriage with Hormisda, by divers strange accidents. Now Pasimondo perceiving, that his owne Nuptials required much cost and solemnity, hee thought it very convenient, that one day might serve for both their Weddings, which else would lanch into more lavish expences, and therefore concluded, that his brother Hormisda should marry Cassandra, at the same time as he wedded Iphigenia. Hereupon, he consulted

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with the Gentlewomans parents, who liking the motion as well as he, the determination was set downe, and one day to effect the duties of both.

When this came to the hearing of Lysimachus, it was very greatly displeasing to him, because now he saw himselfe utterly deprived of al hope to attaine the issue of his desire, if Hormisda received Cassandra in marriage. Yet being a very wise and worthy man, he dissembled his distaste, and began to consider on some apt meanes, whereby to disappoint the marriage once more, which he found impossible to be done, except it were by way of rape or stealth. And that did not appeare to him any difficult matter, in regard of his Office and Authority: onely it would seeme dishonest in him, by giving such an unfitting example. Neverthesse, after long deliberation, honour gave way to love, and resolutely he concluded to steale her away, whatsoever became of it.

Nothing wanted now, but a convenient company to assist him, and the order how to have it done. Then he remembred Chynon and his friends, whom he detained as his prisoners, and perswaded himselfe, that he could not have a more faithfull friend in such a busines, then Chynon was. Hereupon, the night following, he sent for him into his Chamber, and being alonie by themselves, thus he began. Chynon (quoth he) as the Gods are very bountifull, in bestowing their blessings on men, so do they therein most wisely make prooffe of their vertues, and such as they finde firme and constant, in all occurrences which may happen, then they make worthy (as valiant spirits) of the very best and highest merites. Now, they being willing to have more certain experience of thy vertues, then those which heretofore thou hast shewne, within the bounds and limits of thy fathers possessions, which I know to be superabounding: perhaps do intend to present thee other occasions, of more important weight and consequence.

For first of all (as I have heard) by the piercing solitudes of love, of a senselesse creature, that made thee to become a man endued with reason. Afterward, by adverse

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fortune, and now againe by wearisome imprisonment, it seemeth that they are desirous to make tryall, whether thy manly courage be changed, or no, from that which heretofore it was, when thou enjoyedst a matchlesse beauty, and lost her againe in so short a while. Wherefore, if thy vertue be such as it hath bin, the Gods can never give thee any blessing more worthy acceptance, then she whom they are now minded to bestow on thee: in which respect, to the end that thou mayst re-assume thy wanted heroicke spirit, and become more couragious then ever heretofore, I will acquaint thee withall more at large.

Understand then Noble Chynon, that Pasimondo, the onely glad man of thy misfortune, and diligent sutor after thy death, maketh all hast hee can possibly devise to do, to celebrate his marriage with thy faire Mistresse: because he would plead possession of the prey, which Fortune (when she smiled) did first bestow, and (afterward frowning) tooke from thee againe. Now, that it must needs be very irkesome to thee (at least if thy love bee such, as I am perswaded it is) I partly can collect from my selfe, being intended to be wronged by his brother Hormisda, even in the selvesame maner, and on his marriage day, by taking faire Cassandra from me, the onely Jewell of my love and life. For the prevention of two such notorious injuries, I see that Fortune hath left us no other meanes, but onely the vertue of our courages, and the helpe of our right hands, by preparing our selves to Armes, opening a way to thee, by a second rape or stealth; and to me the first, for absolute possession of our divine Mistresses. Wherefore, if thou art desirous to recover thy losse, I will not onely pronounce liberty to thee (which I thinke thou dost little care for without her) but dare also assure thee to enjoy Iphigenia, so thou wilt assist me in mine enterprize, and follow me in my fortune, if the Gods do let them fall into our power.

You may well imagine, that Chynons dismayed soule was not a little cheared at these speeches; and therefore, without craving any long respite of time for answer, thus he

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replied. Lord Lysimachus, in such a busines as this is, you cannot have a faster friend then my selfe, at least, if such good hap may betide me, as you have more then halfe promised: and therefore do no more but command what you would have to be effected by mee, and make no doubt of my courage in the execution: whereon Lysimachus made this answer. Know then Chynon (quoth he) that three dayes hence, these marriages are to bee celebrated in the houses of Pasimondo and Hormisda: upon which day, thou, thy friends, and my selfe (with some others, in whom I repose especiall trust) by the friendly favour of night, will enter into their houses, while they are in the middest of their Joviall feasting; and (seizing on the two Brides) beare them thence to a Shippe, which I will have lye in secret, waiting for our comming, and kill all such as shall presume to impeach us. This direction gave great contentment to Chynon, who remained still in prison, without revealing a word to his owne friends, untill the limited time was come.

Upon the Wedding day, performed with great and magnificent Triumph, there was not a corner in the Brethrens houses, but it sung joy in the highest key. Lysimachus, after he had ordred all things as they ought to be, and the houre for dispatch approached neere; hee made a division in three parts, of Chynon, his followers, and his owne friends, being all well armed under their outward habites. Having first used some encouraging speeches, for more resolute prosecution of the enterprize, hee sent one troope secretly to the Port, that they might not bee hindred of going aboard the ship, when the urgent necessity should require it. Passing with the other two traines of Pasimondo, he left the one at the doore, that such as were in the house, might not shut them up fast, and so impeach their passage forth. Then with Chynon, and the third band of Confederates, he ascended the staires up into the Hall, where he found the Brides with store of Ladies and Gentlewomen, all sitting in comely order at Supper. Rushing in roughly among the attendants, downe they threw

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NOVELL I the Tables, and each of them laying hold of his Mistris, delivered them into the hands of their followers, commanding that they should bee carried aboard the ship, for avoiding of further inconveniences.

This hurrie and amazement being in the house, the Brides weeping, the Ladies lamenting, and all the servants confusedly wondering; Chynon and Lysimachus (with their Friends) having their weapons drawn in their hands, made all opposers to give them way, and so gayned the stair head for their owne descending. There stood Pasimonda, with an huge long Staffe in his hand, to hinder their passage downe the stayres; but Chynon saluted him so soundly on the head, that it being cleft in twaine, he fell dead before his feete. His Brother Hormisda came to his rescue, and sped in the selfe-same manner as he had done; so did divers other beside, whom the companions to Lysimachus and Chynon, either slew out-right, or wounded.

So they left the house, filled with blood, teares, and outcries, going on together, without any hinderance, and so brought both the Brides aboard the ship, which they rowed away instantly with their Oares. For, now the shore was full of armed people, who came in rescue of the stolne Ladies: but all in vaine, because they were lanced into the main, and sayled on merrily towards Candyc. Where being arrived, they were worthily entertained by honourable Friends and Kinsmen, who pacified all unkindnesses betweene them and their Mistresses: And, having accepted them in lawfull marriage, there they lived in no meane joy and contentment: albeit there was a long and troublesome difference (about these rapes) betweene Rhodes and Cyprus.

But yet in the end, by the meanes of Noble Friends and Kindred on either side, labouring to have such discontentment appeased, endangering warre betweene the Kingdomes: after a limited time of banishment, Chynon returned joyfully with his Iphigenia home to Cyprus, and Lysimachus with his beloved Cassandra unto Rhodes, each living in their severall Countries, with much felicity.

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NOVELL

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Faire Constance of Liparis, fell in love with Martuccio Gomito: and hearing that he was dead, desperately she entred into a Barke, which being transported by the windes to Susa in Barbary, from thence she went to Thunis, where she found him to be living. There she made her selfe knowne to him, and he being in great authority, as a privy Counsellor to the King: he married the saide Constance, and returned richly home with hir, to the Island of Liparis.

THE SECOND NOVELL

Wherein is declared, the firme loyaltie of a true Lover: And how Fortune doth sometime humble men, to raise them afterward to a farre higher degree.

WHEN the Queene perceived, that the Novell recited by Pamphilus was concluded, which she graced with especiall commendations: shee commanded Madam Emilia, to take her turne as next in order; whereupon she thus began. Me thinkes it is a matter of equity, that every one should take delight in those things, whereby the recompence may be noted, answerable to their one affection. And because I rather desire to walke along by the paths of pleasure, then dwell on any ceremonious or scrupulous affectation, I shall the more gladly obey our Queene to day, then yesterday I did our melancholly King.

Understand then (Noble Ladies) that neere to Sicily, there is a small Island, commonly called Liparis, wherein (not long since) lived a yong Damosell, named Constance,

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NOVELL II born of very sufficient parentage in the same Island. There dwelt also a yong man called Martuccio Gomito, of comely feature, well conditioned, and not unexpert in many vertuous qualities; affecting Constance in hartly manner: and she so answerable to him in the same kinde, that to be in his company, was her onely felicity. Martuccio coveting to enjoy her in marriage, made his intent knowne to her Father: who upbraiding him with poverty, tolde him plainly that he should not have her. Martuccio greeving to see himselfe thus despised, because he was poore: made such good meanes, that he was provided of a small Barke; and calling such friends (as he thought fit) to his association, made a solemne vow, that he would never returne backe to Liparis, untill he was rich, and in better condition.

In the nature and course of a Rover or Pirate, so put thence to sea, coasting all about Barbarie, robbing and spoyling such as he met with; who were of no greater strength then himselfe: wherein Fortune was so favourable to him, that he became wealthy in a very short while. But as felicities are not alwayes permanent, so he and his followers, not contenting themselves with sufficient riches: by greedy seeking to get more, happened to be taken by certaine ships of the Sarazins, and so were robbed themselves of all that they had gotten, yet they resisted them stoutly a long while together, though it proved to the losse of many lives among them. When the Sarazens had sunke his ship in the Sea, they tooke him with them to Thunis, where he was imprisoned, and lived in extreamest misery.

Newes came to Liparis, not onely by one, but many more beside, that all those which departed thence in the small Barke with Martuccio, were drowned in the Sea, and not a man escaped. When Constance, heard these unwelcome tydings (who was exceeding full of greefe, for his so desperate departure) she wept and lamented extraordinarily, desiring now rather to dye, then live any longer. Yet she had not the heart, to lay any violent hand on her selfe, but rather to end her dayes by some new kinde of necessity. And departing privately from her Fathers house, she went

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to the Port or Haven, where (by chance) she found a small Fisher-boate, lying distant from the other vessels, the owners whereof being all gone on shore, and it well furnished with Masts, Sailes, and Oares, she entred into it; and putting forth the Oares, being some-what skilfull in sayling, (as generally all the Women of that Island are) she so well guided the Sailes, Rudder, and Oares, that she was quickly farre off from the Land, and soly remained at the mercy of the windes. For thus she had resolved with her selfe, that the Boat being uncharged, and without a guide, would either be over-whelmed by the windes, or split in peeces against some Rocke; by which meanes she could [not] escape although she would, but (as it was her desire) must needs be drowned.

In this determination, wrapping a mantle about her head, and lying downe weeping in the boats bottome, she hourelly expected her finall expiration: but it fell out otherwise, and contrary to her desperate intention, because the wind turning to the North, and blowing very gently, without disturbing the Seas a jot, they conducted the small Boat in such sort, that after the night of her entering into it, and the morrowes sailing untill the evening, it came within an hundre leagues of Thunis and to a strond neere a Towne called Susa. The young Damosell knew not whether she were on the sea or land; as one, who not by any accident hapning, lifted up her head to looke about her, neither intended ever to doe. Now it came to passe, that as the boate was driven to the shore, a poore woman stood at the Sea side, washing certaine Fishermens Nets; and seeing the boate comming towards her under saile, without any person appearing in it, she wondred thereat not a little. It being close at the shore, and she thinking the Fishermen to be asleepe therein: stept boldly, and looked into the boate, where she saw not any body, but onely the poore distressed Damosell, whose sorrowes having brought her now into a sound sleepe, the woman gave many cals before she could awake her, which at the length she did, and looked very strangely about her.

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The poore woman perceyving by her habite that she was a Christian, demanded of her (in speaking Latine) how it was possible for her, being all alone in the boate, to arrive there in this manner? When Constance, heard her speake the Latine tongue, she began to doubt, least some contrary winde had turned her backe to Liparis againe, and starting up sodainly, to looke with better advice about her, shee saw her selfe at Land: and not knowing the Countrey, demanded of the poore woman where she was? Daughter (quoth she) you are heere hard by Susa in Barbarie. Which Constance hearing, and plainly perceyving, that death had denied to end her miseries, fearing least she should receive some dishonour, in such a barbarous unkinde Country, and not knowing what should now become of her, shee sate downe by the boates side, wringing her hands, and weeping bitterly.

The good Woman did greatly compassionate her case, and prevailed so well by gentle speeches, that she conducted her into her owne poore habitation, where at length she understoode, by what meanes shee hapned thither so strangely. And perceyving her to be fasting, she set such homely bread as she had before her, a few small Fishes, and a Crewse of Water, praying her for to accept of that poore entertainment, which meere necessity compelled her to do, and shewed her selfe very thankfull for it.

Constance hearing that she spake the Latine language so well; desired to know what she was. Whereto the old woman thus answered: Gentlewoman (quoth she) I am of Trapanum, named Carapresa, and am a servant in this Countrey to certaine Christian Fishermen. The young Maiden (albeit she was very full of sorrow) hearing her name to be Carapresa, conceived it as a good augury to her selfe, and that she had heard the name before, although she knew not what occasion should move her thus to do. Now began her hopes to quicken againe, and yet she could not relie upon what ground; nor was she so desirous of death as before, but made more precious estimation of her life, and without any further declaration of her selfe or

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Countrey, she entreated the good woman (even for charities sake) to take pittie on her youth, and helpe her with such good advice, to prevent all injuries which might happen to her, in such a solitary wofull condition.

Carapresa having heard her request, like a good woman as she was, left Constance in her poore Cottage, and went hastily to leave her nets in safety: which being done, she returned backe againe, and covering Constance with her Mantle, led her on to Susa with her, where being arrived, the good woman began in this manner. Constance, I will bring thee to the house of a very worthy Sarazin Lady, to whom I have done many honest services, according as she pleased to command me. She is an ancient woman, full of charity, and to her I will commend thee as best I may, for I am well assured, that she will gladly entertaine thee, and use thee as if thou wert her own daughter. Now, let it be thy part, during thy time of remaining with her, to employ thy utmost diligence in pleasing her, by deserving and gaining her grace, till heaven shall blesse thee with better fortune: and as she promised, so she performed.

The Sarazine Lady, being well stept into yeares, upon the commendable speeches delivered by Carapresa, did the more seriously fasten her eye on Constance, and compassion provoking her to teares, she tooke her by the hand, and (in loving manner) kissed her fore-head. So she led her further into her house, where dwelt divers other women (but not one man) all exercising themselves in severall labours, as working in all sorts of silke, with Imbroideries of Gold and Silver, and sundry other excellent Arts beside, which in short time were very familiar to Constance, and so pleasing grew her behaviour to the old Lady, and all the rest beside; that they loved and delighted in her wonderfully, and (by little and little) she attained to the speaking of their language, although it were very harsh and difficult.

Constance continuing thus in the old Ladies service at Susa, and thought to be dead or lost in her owne Fathers house; it fortun'd, that one reigning then as King of

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Thunis, who named himselfe Mariabdelâ : there was a young Lord of great birth, and very powerfull, who lived as then in Granada, and pleaded that the Kingdome of Thunis belonged to him. In which respect, he mustred together a mighty Army, and came to assault the King, as hoping to expell him. These newes comming to the eare of Martuccio Gomito, who spake the Barbarian Language perfectly ; and hearing it reported, that the King of Thunis made no meane preparation for his owne defence: he conferred with one of his keepers, who had the custody of him, and the rest taken with him, saying: If (quoth he) I could have meanes to speake with the King, and he were pleased to allow of my counsell, I can enstruct him in such a course, as shall assure him to win the honor of the field. The Guard reported these speeches to his Master, who presently acquainted the King therewith, and Martuccio being sent for ; he was commanded to speake his minde: Whereupon he began in this manner.

My gracious Lord, during the time that I have frequented your countrey, I have heedfully observed, that the Militarie Discipline used in your fights and battailes, dependeth more upon your Archers, then any other men imployed in your warre. And therefore, if it could be so ordered, that this kinde of Artillery may faile in your enemies Campe, and yours be sufficiently furnished therewith, you neede make no doubt of winning the battaile: whereto the King thus replied. Doubtlesse, if such an act were possible to be done, it would give great hope of successefull prevailing. Sir, said Martuccio, if you please it may be done, and I can quickly resolve you how. Let the strings of your Archers Bowes be made more soft and gentle, then those which heretofore they have formerly used; and next, let the nockes of the Arrowes be so provided, as not to receive any other, then those pliant gentle strings. But this must be done so secretly, that your enemies may have no knowledge thereof, least they should provide themselves in the same manner. Now the reason (Gracious Lord) why thus I counsell you, is to this end. When the Archers on the

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Enemies side have shot their Arrowes at your men, and yours in the like maner at them: it followeth, that (upon meere constraint) they must gather up your Arrowes, to shoote them backe againe at you, for so long while as the battell endureth, as no doubt but your men wil do the like to them. But your enemies will finde themselves much deceived, because they can make no use of your peoples Arrowes, in regard that the nockes are too narrow to receive their boystrous strings. Which will fall out contrary with your followers, for the pliant strings belonging to your Bowes, are as apt for their enemies great nockt Arrowes, as their owne, and so they shall have free use of both, reserving them in plentiful store, when your adversaries must stand unfurnished of any, but them that they cannot any way use.

This counsell pleased the King very highly, and he being a Prince of great understanding, gave order to have it accordingly followed, and thereby valiantly vanquished his enemies. Heereupon, Martuccio came to be great in his grace, as also consequently rich, and seated in no meane place of authority. Now as worthy and commendable actions are soone spread abroad, in honor of the man by whom they hapned: even so the fame of this rare got victory, was quickly noysed throughout the Countrey, and came to the hearing of poore Constance, that Martuccio Gomito (whom she supposed so long since to be dead) was living, and in honourable condition. The love which formerly she bare unto him, being not altogether extinct in her heart; of a small sparke, brake forth into a sodaine flame, and so encreased day by day, that her hope (being before almost quite dead) revived againe in chearfull manner.

Having imparted all her fortunes to the good old Lady with whom she dwelt; she told her beside, that she had an earnest desire to see Thunis, to satisfie her eyes as well as her eares, concerning the rumor blazed abroad. The good old Lady commended her desire, and (even as if she had bene her Mother) tooke her with her aboard a Barke, and so sayled thence to Thunis, where both she and Constance

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NOVELL II found honourable welcome, in the house of a kinsman to the Sarazin Lady. Carapresa also went along with them thither, and her they sent abroad into the City, to understand the newes of Martuccio Gomito. After they knew for a certainty that he was living, and in great authority about the King, according as the former report went of him. Then the good old Lady, being desirous to let Martuccio know, that his faire friend Constance was come thither to see him; went her selfe to the place of his abiding, and spake unto him in this manner. Noble Martuccio, there is a servant of thine in my house, which came from Liparis, and requireth to have a little private conference with thee: but because I durst not trust any other with the message, my selfe (at her entreaty) am come to acquaint thee therewith. Martuccio gave her kinde and hearty thanks, and then went along with her to the house.

No sooner did Constance behold him, but she was ready to dye with conceite of joy, and being unable to containe her passion: sodainely she threw her armes about his necke, and in meere compassion of her many misfortunes, as also the instant solace of her soule (not being able to utter one word) the teares trickled abundantly downe her cheekes. Martuccio also seeing his faire friend, was overcome with exceeding admiration, and stood awhile, as not knowing what to say; till venting forth a vehement sighe, thus he spake. My deerest love Constance! Art thou yet living? It is a tedious long while since I heard thou wast lost, and never any tydings knowne of thee in thine owne Fathers house. With which words, the teares standing in his eyes, most lovingly he embraced her, Constance recounted to him all her fortunes, and what kindness she had receyved from the Sarazine Lady, since her first houre of comming to her. And after much other discourse passing betweene them, Martuccio departed from her, and returning to the King his master, tolde him all the history of his fortunes, and those beside of his Love Constance, being purposely minded (with his gracious liking) to marry her according to the Christian Law.

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NOVELL

II

The King was much amazed at so many strange accidents, and sending for Constance to come before him; from her owne mouth he heard the whole relation of her continued affection to Martuccio, whereupon hee saide. Now trust me faire Damosell, thou hast dearely deserved him to be thy husband. Then sending for very costly Jewels, and rich presents, the one halfe of them he gave to her, and the other to Martuccio, graunting them license withall, to marry according to their owne mindes.

Martuccio did many honors, and gave great gifts to the aged Sarazine Lady, with whom Constance had lived so kindly respected: which although she had no neede of, neither ever expected any such rewarding; yet (conquered by their urgent importunity, especially Constance, who could not be thankfull enough to her) she was enforced to receive them, and taking her leave of them weeping, sayled backe againe to Susa.

Within a short while after, the King licensing their departure thence, they entred into a small Barke, and Carapresa with them, sailing on with prosperous gales of winde, untill they arrived at Liparis, where they were entertained with generall rejoycing. And because their marriage was not sufficiently performed at Thunis, in regard of divers Christian ceremonies there wanting, their Nuptials were againe most honourably solemnized, and they lived (many yeares after) in health and much happinesse.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL

III

Pedro Bocamazzo, escaping away with a yong Damosell which he loved, named Angelina, met with Theeves in his journey. The Damosell flying fearfully into a Forrest, by chance arriveth at a Castle. Pedro being taken by the Theeves, and happening afterward to escape from them ; commeth (accidentally) to the same Castle where Angelina was. And marrying her, they then returned home to Rome.

THE THIRD NOVELL

Wherein, the severall powers both of Love and Fortune, is more at large approved.

THERE was not any one in the whole company, but much commended the Novell reported by Madam Emilia, and when the Queene perceived it was ended, she turned towards Madam Eliza, commanding her to continue on their delightfull exercise : whereto she declaring her willing obedience, began to speake thus. Courteous Ladies, I remember one unfortunate night, which happened to two Lovers, that were not indued with the greatest discretion. But because they had very many faire and happy dayes afterwards, I am the more willing for to let you heare it.

In the City of Rome, which (in times past) was called the Lady and Mistresse of the world, though now scarcely so good as the waiting maid : there dwelt sometime a yong Gentleman, named Pedro Boccamazzo, descended from one of the most honorable families in Rome, who was much enamoured of a beautifull Gentlewoman, called Angelina, Daughter to one named Gigliuozzo Saullo, whose fortunes were none of the fairest, yet he greatly esteemed among the

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NOVELL

III

Romanes. The entercourse of love betweene these twaine, had so equally enstructed their hearts and soule, that it could hardly be judged which of them was the more fervent in affection. But he, not being inured to such oppressing passions, and therefore the lesse able to support them, except he were sure to compasse his desire, plainly made the motion, that he might enjoy her in honourable marriage. Which his parents and friends hearing, they went to conferre with him, blaming him with over-much basenesse, so farre to disgrace himselfe and his stocke. Beside, they advised the Father to the Maid, neither to credit what Pedro saide in this case, or to live in hope of any such match, because they all did wholly despise it.

Pedro perceiving, that the way was shut up, whereby (and none other) he was to mount the Ladder of his hopes; began to wax weary of longer living: and if he could have won her fathers consent, he would have married her in the despite of all his friends. Neverthelesse, he had a conceit hammering in his head, which if the maid would bee as forward as himselfe, should bring the matter to full effect. Letters and secret intelligences passing still betweene, at length he understood her ready resolution, to adventure with him thorough all fortunes whatsoever, concluding on their sodaine and secret flight from Rome. For which Pedro did so well provide, that very early in a morning, and well mounted on horsebacke, they tooke the way leading unto Alagna, where Pedro had some honest friends, in whom he reposed especiall trust. Riding on thus thorow the country, having no leysure to accomplish their marriage, because they stood in feare of pursuite: they were ridden above foure leagues from Rome, still shortning the way with their amorous discoursing.

It fortun'd, that Pedro having no certaine knowledge of the way, but following a trackt guiding too farre on the left hand; rode quite out of course, and came at last within sight of a small Castle, out of which (before they were aware) yssued twelve Villaines, whom Angelina sooner espyed, then Pedro could do; which made her cry out to

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NOVELL III

him, saying: Helpe deere Love to save us, or else we shall be assayed. Pedro then turning his horse so expeditiously as he could, and giving him the spurres as need required; mainly he galloped into a neere adjoining Forrest, more minding the following of Angelina, then any direction of his way, or them that endcavoured to bee his hindrance. So that by often winding and turning about, as the passage appeared troublesome to him, when he thought him selfe free and furthest from them, he was round engirt, and seized on by them. When they had made him to dismount from his horse, questioning him of whence and what he was, and he resolving them therein, they fell into a secret consultation, saying thus among themselves. This man is a friend to our deadly enemies, how can wee then otherwise dispose of him, but dreame him of all he hath, and in despight of the Orsini (men in nature hatefull to us) hang him up heere on one of these Trees?

All of them agreeing in this dismall resolution, they commanded Pedro to put off his garments, which he yeelding to do (albeit unwillingly) it so fell out, that five and twenty other theeves, came sodainly rushing in upon them, crying, Kill, kill, and spare not a man.

They which before had surprized Pedro, desiring now to shift for their owne safetie, left him standing quaking in his shirt, and so ranne away mainely to defend themselves. Which the new crew perceyving, and that their number farre exceeded the other: they followed to robbe them of what they had gotten, accounting it as a present purchase for them. Which when Pedro perceyved, and saw none tarrying to prey upon him; hee put on his cloathes againe, and mounting on his owne Horse, galloped that way, which Angelina before had taken: yet could he not descry any tracke or path, or so much as the footing of a Horse; but thought himselfe in sufficient security, being rid of them that first seized on him, and also of the rest, which followed in the pursuite of them.

For the losse of his beloved Angelina, he was the most wofull man in the world, wandering one while this way, and

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III

then againe another, calling for her all about the Forrest, without any answer returning to him. And not daring to ride backe againe, on he travailed still, not knowing where to make his arrivall. And having formerly heard of savage ravenous beasts, which commonly live in such unfrequented Forrests: he not onely was in feare of loosing his owne life, but also despayred much for his Angelina, least some Lyon or Woolfe, had torne her body in peeces.

Thus rode on poore unfortunate Pedro, untill the breake of day appeared, not finding any meanes to get forth of the Forrest, still crying and calling for his fayre friend, riding many times backward, when as hee thought hee rode forward, untill hee became so weake and faint, what with extreame feare, lowd calling, and continuing so long awhile without any sustenance, that the whole day being thus spent in vaine, and darke night sodainly come uppon him, he was not able to hold out any longer.

Now was he in farre worse case then before, not knowing where, or how to dispose of himselfe, or what might best be done in so great a necessity. From his Horse he alighted, and tying him by the bridle unto a great tree, uppe he climbed into the same Tree, fearing to be devoured (in the night time) by some wilde beast, choosing rather to let his Horse perish, then himselfe. Within a while after, the Moone beganne to rise, and the skies appeared bright and cleare: yet durst hee not nod, or take a nap, least he should fall out of the tree; but sate still greiving, sighing, and mourning, desparing of ever seeing his Angelina any more, for he could not be comforted by the smallest hopefull perswasion, that any good Fortune might befall her in such a desolate Forrest, where nothing but dismall feares was to be expected, and no likelihood that she should escape with life.

Now, concerning poore affrighted Angelina, who (as you heard before) knew not any place of refuge to flye unto: but even as it pleased the horse to carry her: she entred so farre into the Forrest, that she could not devise where to seeke her owne safety. And therefore, even as it fared

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NOVELL III with her friend Pedro, in the same manner did it fall out with her, wandering the whole night, and all the day following, one while taking one hopefull tracke, and then another, calling, weeping, wringing her hands, and greivously complaining of her hard fortune. At the length, perceiving that Pedro came not to her at all, she found a little path (which she lighted on by great good fortune) even when dark night was apace drawing, and followed it so long, till it brought her within the sight of a small poore Cottage, whereto she rode on so fast as she could; and found therein a very old man, having a wife rather more aged then he, who seeing her to be without company, the old man spake thus unto her.

Faire Daughter (quoth he) whether wander you at such an unseasonable houre, and all alone in a place so desolate? The Damosell weeping, replied; that she had lost her company in the Forrest, and enquired how neere shee was to Alagna. Daughter (answered the old man) this is not the way to Alagna, for it is above six leagues hence. Then shee desired to know, how farre off she was from such houses, where she might have any reasonable lodging? There are none so neere, said the old man, that day light will give you leave to reach. May it please you then good Father (replied Angelina) seeing I cannot travaile any whether else; for Gods sake, to let me remaine heere with you this night. Daughter answered the good old man, we can gladly give you entertainment here, for this night, in such poore manner as you see: but let mee tell you withall, that up and downe these woods (as well by night as day) walke companies of all conditions, and rather enemies then friends, who do us many greivous displeasures and harmes. Now if by misfortune, you being here, any such people should come, and seeing you so lovely faire, as indeed you are, offer you any shame or injurie: Alas you sec, it lies not in our power to lend you any help or succour. I thought it good (therefore) to acquaint you heere with, because if any such mischance do happen, you should not afterward complaine of us.

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The yong Maiden, seeing the time to be so farre spent, albeit the old mans words did much dismay her, yet she thus replied. If it be the will of heaven, both you and I shall be defended from any misfortune: but if any such mischance do happen, I account the meanes lesse deserving grief, if I fall into the mercy of men, then to be devoured by wild beasts in this Forrest. So, being dismounted from her horse, and entred into the homely house; shee supt poorely with the old man and his wife, with such meane cates as their provision affoorded: and after supper, lay downe in her garments on the same poore pallet, where the aged couple tooke their rest, and was very well contented therewith, albeit she could not refraine from sighing and weeping, to be thus divided from her deare Pedro, of whose life and welfare she greatly despaired.

When it was almost day, she heard a great noise of people travailing by, whereupon sodainly she arose, and ranne into a Garden plot, which was on the backside of the poore Cottage, espying in one of the corners a great stacke of Hay, wherein she hid her selfe, to the end, that travelling strangers might not readily finde her there in the house. Scarsely was she fully hidden, but a great company of Theeves and Villaines, finding the doore open, rushed into the Cottage, where looking round about them for some booty, they saw the Damosels horse stand ready sadled, which made them demand to whom it belonged. The good old man, not seeing the Maiden present there, but immagining that she had made some shift for her selfe, answered thus. Gentlemen, there is no body here but my wife and my selfe: as for this Horse, which seemeth to be escaped from the Owner; hee came hither yesternight, and we gave him house-roume heere, rather then to be devoured by Wolves abroad. Then said the principall of the Theevish crew: This horse shall be ours, in regard he hath no other Master, and let the owner come claime him of us.

When they had searched every corner of the poore Cottage, and found no such prey as they looked for, some of them went into the backside; where they had left their

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NOVELL III Javelins and Targets, wherwith they used commonly to travaile. It fortunèd, that one of them, being more subtly suspitious then the rest, thrust his Javelin into the stacke of Hay, in the very same place where the Damosell lay hidden, missing very little of killing her; for it entred so farre, that the iron head pierced quite thorough her Garments, and touched her left bare brest: whereupon, shee was ready to cry out, as fearing that she was wounded: but considering the place where she was, she lay still, and spake not a word. This disordered company, after they had fed on some young Kids, and other flesh which they brought with them thither, they went thence about their theeving exercise, taking the Damosels horse along with them.

After they were gone a good distance off, the good old man began thus to question his Wife. What is become of (quoth hee) our young Gentlewoman, which came so late to us yesternight? I have not scen her to day since our arising. The old woman made answer, that she knew not where she was, and sought all about to finde her. Angelinaes feares being well over-blowne, and hearing none of the former noise, which made her the better hope of their departure, came forth of the Hay-stack; wherof the good old man was not a little joyfull, and because she had so well escaped from them: so seeing it was now broad day-light, he said unto her. Now that the morning is so fairely begun, if you can be so well contented, we will bring you to a Castle, which stands about two miles and an halfe hence, where you will be sure to remaine in safety. But you must needs travaile thither on foot, because the night-walkers that happened hither, have taken away your horse with them.

Angelina making little or no account of such a losse, entreated them for charities sake, to conduct her to that Castle, which accordingly they did, and arrived there betweene seven and eight of the clock. The Castle belonged to one of the Orsini, being called, Liello di Campo di Fiore, and by great good fortune, his wife was then there, she being a very vertuous and religious Lady. No sooner did

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she looke upon Angelina, but she knew her immediately, and entertaining her very willingly, requested, to know the reason of her thus arriving there: which she at large related, and moved the Lady (who likewise knew Pedro perfectly well) to much compassion, because he was a kinsman and deare friend to her Husband; and understanding how the Theeves had surprized him, she feared, that he was slaine among them, whereupon she spake thus to Angelina. Seeing you know not what is become of my kinsman Pedro, you shall remaine here with me, untill such time, as (if we heare no other tidings of him) you may with safety be sent backe to Rome.

Pedro all this while sitting in the Tree, so full of griefe, as no man could be more; about the houre of midnight (by the bright splendour of the Moone) espied about some twenty Wolves, who, so soone as they got a sight of the Horse, ran and engirt him round about. The Horse when he perceived them so neere him, drew his head so strongly back-ward, that breaking the reines of his bridle, he laboured to escape away from them. But being beset on every side, and utterly unable to helpe himself, he contended with his teeth and feete in his owne defence, till they haled him violently to the ground, and tearing his body in pieces, left not a jot of him but the bare bones, and afterward ran ranging thorow the Forest. At this sight, poore Pedro was mightily dismaied, fearing to speed no better then his Horse had done, and therefore could not devise what was best to be done; for he saw no likelihood, of getting out of the Forest with life. But day-light drawing on apace, and he almost dead with cold, having stood quaking so long in the Tree; at length by continuall looking every where about him, to discerne the least glimpse of any comfort; he espied a great fire, which seemed to be about halfe a mile off from him.

By this time it was broad day, when he descended downe out of the Tree, (yet not without much feare) and tooke his way towards the fire, where being arrived, he found a company of Shepherds banquetting about it, whom he

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NOVELL III

curteously saluting, they tooke pity on his distresse, and welcommed him kindly. After he had tasted of such cheare as they had, and was indifferently refreshed by the good fire; he discoursed his hard disasters to them, as also how he happened thither, desiring to know, if any Village or Castle were neere there about, where he might in better manner releve himselfe. The Shepherds told him, that about a mile and an halfe from thence, was the Castle of Signior Liello di Campo di Fiore, and that his Lady was residing there; which was no meane comfort to poore Pedro, requesting that one of them would accompany him thither, as two of them did in loving manner, to rid him of all further feares.

When he was arrived at the Castle, and found there divers of his familiar acquaintance; he laboured to procure some meanes, that the Damosell might bee sought for in the Forrest. Then the Lady calling for her, and bringing her to him; he ran and caught her in his armes, being ready to swoone with conceite of joy, for never could any man be more comforted, then he was at the sight of his Angelina, and questionlesse, her joy was not a jot inferiour to his, such a simpathy of firme love was settled betwene them. The Lady of the Castle, after she had given them very gracious entertainment, and understood the scope of their bold adventure; she reproved them both somewhat sharpely, for presuming so farre without the consent of their Parents. But perceiving (notwithstanding all her remonstrances) that they continued still constant in their resolution, without any inequality of either side; shee saide to her selfe. Why should this matter be any way offensive to me? They love each other loyally; they are not inferiour to one another in birth, but in fortune; they are equally loved and allied to my Husband, and their desire is both honest and honorable. Moreover, what know I, if it be the will of Heaven to have it so? Theeves intended to hang him, in malice to his name and kinred, from which hard fate he hath happily escaped. Her life was endangered by a sharpe pointed Javeline, and yet her fairer starres would not suffer her so to

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perish : beside, they have both escaped the fury of ravenous wild beasts ; and all these are apparant signes, that future comforts should recompence former passed misfortunes ; farre be it therefore from me, to hinder the appointment of the Heavens.

Then turning her selfe to them, thus she proceeded. If your desire be to joyne in honourable marriage, I am well contented therewith, and your nuptials shall here be solemnized at my Husbands charges. Afterward both he and I will endeavour, to make peace betweene you and your discontented Parents. Pedro was not a little joyfull at her kinde offer, and Angelina much more then he ; so they were married together in the Castle, and worthily feasted by the Lady, as Forrest entertainment could permit, and there they enjoyed the first fruits of their love. Within a short while after, the Lady and they (well mounted on Horse-backe, and attended with an honourable traine) returned to Rome ; where her Lord Liello and she prevailed so well with Pedros angry Parents : that the variance ended in love and peace, and afterward they lived lovingly together, till old age made them as honourable, as their true and mutuall affection formerly had done.

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Ricciardo Manardy, was found by Messer Lizio da Valbonna, as he sate fast asleepe at his Daughters Chamber window, having his hand fast in hers, and she sleeping in the same manner. Whereupon, they are joyned together in marriage, and their long loyall love mutually recompenced.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

Declaring the discreete providence of Parents, in care of their Childrens love and their owne credit, to cut off inconveniences, before they do proceede too farre.

MADAM ELIZA having ended her Tale, and heard what commendations the whole company gave thereof; the Queene commanded Philostratus, to tell a Novell agreeing with his owne minde, who smiling thereat, thus replied. Faire Ladies, I have bene so often checkt and snapt, for my yesterdayes matter and argument of discoursing, which was both tedious and offensive to you; that if I intended to make you any amends, I should now undertake to tell such a Tale, as might put you into a mirthfull humour. Which I am determined to do, in relating a brieft and pleasant Novell, not any way offensive (as I trust) but exemplary for some good notes of observation.

Not long since, there lived in Romania, a Knight, a very honest Gentleman, and well qualified, whose name was Messer Lizio da Valbonna, to whom it fortun'd, that (at his entrance into age) by his Lady and wife, called Jaqueminia, he had a Daughter, the very choycest and goodliest gentlewoman in all those places. Now because such a happy blessing (in their olde yeeres) was not a little comfortable to them; they thought themselves the more bound

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in duty, to be circumspect of her education, by keeping her out of over-frequent companies, but onely such as agreed best with their gravity, and might give the least ill example to their Daughter, who was named Catharina; as making no doubt, but by this their provident and wary respect, to match her in marriage answerable to their liking. There was also a yong Gentleman, in the very flourishing estate of his youthfull time, descended from the Family of the Manardy da Brettinoro, named Messer Ricciardo, who oftentimes frequented the House of Messer Lizio, and was a continuall welcome guest to his Table, Messer Lizio and his wife making the like account of him, even as if hee [had] bene their owne Sonne.

This young Gallant, perceiving the Maiden to be very beautifull, of singular behaviour, and of such yeeres as was fit for marriage, became exceeding enamoured of her, yet concealed his affection so closely as he could, which was not so covertly carried, but that she perceived it, and grew into as good liking of him. Many times he had an earnest desire to have conference with her, which yet still he deferred, as fearing to displease her; at the length he lighted on an apt opportunity, and boldly spake to her in this manner. Faire Catharina, I hope thou wilt not let me die for thy love? Signior Ricciardo (replyed she suddenly againe) I hope you will extend the like mercy to me, as you desire that I should shew to you. This answer was so pleasing to Messer Ricciardo, that presently he saide. Alas deare Love, I have dedicated all my fairest fortunes onely to thy service, so that it remaineth soly in thy power, to dispose of me as best shall please thee, and to appoint such times of private conversation, as may yeeld more comfort to my poore afflicted soule.

Catharina standing musing awhile, at last returned him this answer. Signior Ricciardo, quoth she, you see what a restraint is set on my liberty, how short I am kept from conversing with any one, that I hold this our enterparlance now almost miraculous. But if you could devise any convenient meanes, to admit us more familiar freedome, without any prejudice to mine honour, or the least distaste to

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my Parents; do but enstruet it, and I will adventure it. Ricciardo having considered on many wayes and meanes, thought one to be the fittest of all; and therefore thus replied. Catharina (quoth he) the onely place for our more private talking together, I conceive to be the Gallery over your Fathers Garden. If you can winne your Mother to let you lodge there, I will make meanes to climbe over the wall, and at the goodly gazing window, we may discourse so long as we please. Now trust me deare Love (answered Catharina) no place can be more convenient for our purpose, there shall we heare the sweete Birds sing, especially the Nightingale, which I have heard singing there all the night long; I will breake the matter to my Mother, and how I speede, you shall heare further from me. So, with divers parting kisses, they brake off conference, till their next meeting.

On the day following, which was towards the ending of the moneth of May, Catharina began to complaine to her Mother, that the season was over-hot and tedious, to be still lodged in her Mothers Chamber, because it was an hinderance to her sleeping; and wanting rest, it would be an empairing of her health. Why Daughter (quoth the Mother) the weather (as yet) is not so hot, but (in my minde) you may very well endure it. Alas Mother, saide she, aged people, as you and my Father are, do not feele the heates of youthfull blood, by reason of your farre colder complexion, which is not to be measured by younger yeeres. I know that well Daughter, replied the Mother; but is it in my power, to make the weather warme or coole, as thou perhaps wouldst have it? Seasons are to be suffered, according to their severall qualities; and though the last night might seeme hot, this next ensuing may be cooler, and then thy rest will be the better. No Mother, quoth Catharina, that cannot be; for as Summer proceedeth on, so the heate encreaseth, and no expectation can be of temperate weather, untill it groweth to Winter againe. Why Daughter, saide the Mother, what wouldest thou have me to do? Mother (quoth she) if it might stand with my Fathers good liking and yours, I would be

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spared from the Garden Gallery, which is a great deale more coole lodged. There shall I heare the sweete Nightingale sing, as every night she useth to do, and many other pretty Birdes beside, which I cannot do lodging in your Chamber.

The Mother loving her Daughter dearely, as being somewhat over-fond of her, and very willing to give her contentment; promised to impart her minde to her Father, not doubting but to compasse what shee requested. When she had mooved the matter to Messer Lizio whose age made him somewhat froward and teasty; angerly said to his wife. Why how now woman? Cannot our Daughter sleepe, except she heare the Nightingale sing? Let there be a bed made for her in the Oven, and there let the Crickets make her melody. When Catharina heard this answere from her Father, and saw her desire to be disappointed; not onely could she take any rest the night following, but also complained more of the heate then before, not suffering her Mother to take any rest, which made her go angerly to her Husband in the morning, saying. Why Husband, have we but one onely Daughter, whom you pretend to love right dearly, and yet can you be so carelesse of her, as to denie her a request, which is no more then reason? What matter is it to you or me, to let her lodge in the Garden Gallery? Is her young blood to be compared with ours? Can our weake and crazie bodies, feele the frolicke temper of hers? Alas, she is hardly (as yet) out of her childish yeeres, and Children have many desires farre differing from ours: the singing of Birdes is rare musicke to them, and chiefly the Nightingale; whose sweete notes will provoke them to rest, when neither Art or Physicke can do it.

Is it even so Wife? answered Messer Lizio. Must your will and mine be governed by our Daughter? Well be it so then, let her bed be made in the Garden Gallerie, but I will have the keeping of the key, both to locke her in at night, and set her at liberty every morning. Woman, yong wenches are wily, many wanton crotchets are

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busie in their braines, and to us that are aged, they sing like Lapwings, telling us one thing, and intending another; talking of Nightingales, when their mindes run on Cocke-Sparrowes. Seeing Wife, she must needes have her minde, let yet your care and mine extend so farre, to keepe her chastity uncorrupted, and our credulity from being abused. Catharina having thus prevailed with her Mother, her bed made in the Garden Gallerie, and secret intelligence given to Ricciardo, for preparing his meanes of accesse to her window; old provident Lizio lockes the doore to bed-ward, and gives her liberty to come forth in the morning, for his owne lodging was neere to the same Gallery.

In the dead and silent time of night, when all (but Lovers) take their rest; Ricciardo having provided a Ladder of Ropes, with grappling hookes to take hold above and below, according as he had occasion to use it. By helpe thereof, first he mounted over the Garden wall, and then climbe up to the Gallery window, before which (as is every where in Italie) was a little round engirting Tarras, onely for a man to stand upon, for making cleane the window, or otherwise repairing it. Many nights (in this manner) enjoyed they their meetings, entermixing their amorous conference with infinite kisses and kinde embraces, as the window gave leave, he sitting in the Tarras, and departing alwayes before breake of day, for feare of being discovered by any.

But, as excesse of delight is the Nurse to negligence, and begetteth such an over-presuming boldnesse, as afterward proveth to be sauced with repentance: so came it to passe with our over-fond Lovers, in being taken tardy through their owne folly. After they had many times met in this manner, the nights (according to the season) growing shorter and shorter, which their stolne delight made them lesse respective of, then was requisite in an adventure so dangerous: it fortun'd, that their amorous pleasure had so farre transported them, and dulled their senses in such sort, by these their continuall nightly watchings; that they both fell fast asleepe, he having his hand closed in hers, and she

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one arme folded about his body, and thus they slept till broade day light. Old Messer Lizio, who continually was the morning Cocke to the whole House, going foorth into his Garden, saw how his Daughter and Ricciardo were seated at the window. In he went againe, and going to his wives Chamber, saide to her. Rise quickly wife, and you shall see, what made your Daughter so desirous to lodge in the Garden Gallery. I perceive that shee loved to heare the Nightingale, for she hath caught one, and holds him fast in her hand. Is it possible, saide the Mother, that our Daughter should catch a live Nightingale in the darke? You shall see that your selfe, answered Messer Lizio, if you will make hast, and go with me.

She, putting on her garments in great haste, followed her Husband, and being come to the Gallery doore, he opened it very softly, and going to the window, shewed her how they both sate fast asleepe, and in such manner as hath bene before declared: whereupon, shee perceiving how Ricciardo and Catharina had both deceived her, would have made an outcry, but that Messer Lizio spake thus to her. Wife, as you love me, speake not a word, neither make any noyse: for, seeing shee hath loved Ricciardo without our knowledge, and they have had their private meetings in this manner, yet free from any blamefull imputation; he shall enjoy her, and she him. Ricciardo is a Gentleman, well derived, and of rich possessions, it can be no disparagement to us, that Catharina match with him in mariage, which he neither shall, or dare deny to do, in regard of our Lawes severity; for climbing up to my window with his Ladder of Ropes, whereby his life is forfeited to the Law, except our Daughter please to spare it, as it remaineth in her power to doe, by accepting him as her husband, or yeelding his life up to the Law, which surely she will not suffer, their love agreeing together in such mutuall manner, and he adventuring so dangerously for her.

Madam Jaquemina, perceiving that her husband spake very reasonably, and was no more offended at the matter; stept aside with him behinde the drawne Curtaines, untill

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NOVELL IV they should awake of themselves. At the last, Ricciardo awaked, and seeing it was so farre in the day, thought himselfe halfe dead, and calling to Catharina, saide. Alas deare Love! what shall we doe? we have slept too long, and shall be taken here. At which words, Messer Lizio stept forth from behind the Curtaines, saying. Nay, Signior Ricciardo, seeing you have found such an unbecoming way hither, we will provide you a better for your backe returning. When Ricciardo saw the Father and Mother both there present, he could not devise what to do or say, his senses became so strangely confounded; yet knowing how hainously he had offended, if the strictnesse of Law should bee challenged against him, falling on his knees, he saide. Alas Messer Lizio, I humbly crave your mercy, confessing my selfe well worthy of death, that knowing the sharpe rigour of the Law, I would presume so audaciously to breake it. But pardon me worthy Sir, my loyall and unfeigned love to your Daughter Catharina, hath bene the only cause of my transgressing.

Ricciardo (replied Messer Lizio) the love I beare thee, and the honest confidence I do repose in thee, step up (in some measure) to plead thine excuse, especially in the regard of my Daughter, whom I blame thee not for loving, but for this unlawfull way of presuming to her. Neverthelesse, perceiving how the case now standeth, and considering withall, that youth and affection were the ground of thine offence: to free thee from death, and my selfe from dishonour, before thou departest hence, thou shalt espouse my Daughter Catharina, to make her thy lawfull wife in marriage, and wipe off all scandall to my House and me. All this while was poore Catharina on her knees likewise to her Mother, who (notwithstanding this her bold adventure) made earnest suite to her Husband to remit all, because Ricciardo right gladly condescended, as it being the maine issue of his hope and desire; to accept his Catharina in marriage, whereto she was as willing as he. Messer Lizio presently called for the Confessour of his House, and borrowing one of his Wives Rings, before they went out of the Gallery;

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Ricciardo and Catharina were espoused together, to their
no little joy and contentment. NOVELL
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Now had they more leasure for further conference, with the Parents and kindred to Ricciardo, who being no way discontented with this sudden match, but applauding it in the highest degree; they were publicly married againe in the Cathedrall Church, and very honourable triumphes performed at the nuptials, living long after in happy prosperity.

Guidotto of Cremona, departing out of this mortall life, left a Daughter of his, with Jacomino of Pavia. Giovanni di Severino, and Menghino da Minghole, fell both in love with the young Maiden, and fought for her; who being afterward knowne to be the Sister to Giovanni, she was given in mariage to Menghino.

THE FIFTH NOVELL

Wherein may be observed, what quarrels and contentions are occasioned by Love; with some particular description, concerning the sincerity of a loyall friend.

ALL the Ladies laughing heartily, at the Novell of the Nightingale, so pleasingly delivered by Philostratus, when they saw the same to be fully ended, the Queene thus spake. Now trust me Philostratus, though yester-day you did much oppresse mee with melancholly, yet you have made me such an amends to day, as we have little reason to complaine any more of you. So converting her speech to Madam Neiphila, shee commanded her to succcede with her discourse, which willingly she yeilded to, beginning

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NOVELL in this manner. Seing it pleased Philostratus, to produce
V his Novell out of Romania: I meane to walke with him in
the same jurisdiction, concerning what I am to say.

There dwelt sometime in the City of Fano, two Lombards, the one being named Guidotto of Cremona, and the other Jacomino of Pavia, men of sufficient entrance into yeares, having followed the warres (as Souldiers) all their youthfull time. Guidotto feeling sicknesse to over-master him, and having no sonne, kinsman, or friend, in whom he might repose more trust, then he did in Jacomino: having long conference with him about his worldly affaires, and settled his whole estate in good order; he left a Daughter to his charge, about ten yeeres of age, with all such goods as he enjoyed, and then departed out of this life. It came to passe, that the City of Faenza, long time being molested with tedious warres, and subjected to very servile condition; beganne now to recover her former strength, with free permission (for all such as pleased) to returne and possesse their former dwellings. Whereupon, Jacomino (having sometime bene an inhabitant there) was desirous to live in Faenza againe, conveying thither all his goods, and taking with him also the young Girle, which Guidotto had left him, whom hee loved, and respected as his owne childe.

As shee grew in stature, so she did in beauty and vertuous qualities, as none was more commended throughout the whole City, for faire, civill, and honest demeanour, which incited many amorously to affect her. But (above all the rest) two very honest young men, of good fame and repute, who were so equally in love addicted to her, that being jealous of each others fortune, in preventing of their severall hopefull expectation; a deadly hatred grew suddenly betweene them, the one being named Giovanni de Severino, and the other Menghino de Minghole. Either of these two young men, before the Maide was fiftene yeeres old, laboured to be possessed of her in marriage, but her Guardian would give no consent thereto: wherefore, perceiving their honest intended meaning to be frustrated,

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they now began to busie their braines, how to forestall one another by craft and circumvention.

Jacomino had a Maide-servant belonging to his House, somewhat aged, and a Man-servant beside, named Grinello, of mirthfull disposition, and very friendly, with whom Giovanni grew in great familiarity, and when he found time fit for the purpose, he discovered his love to him, requesting his furtherance and assistance, in compassing the height of his desire, with bountifull promises of rich rewarding; whereto Grinello returned this answer. I know not how to sted you in this case, but when my Master shall sup forth at some Neighbours house, to admit your entrance where shée is: because, if I offer to speake to her, she never will stay to heare mee. Wherefore, if my service this way may doe you any good, I promise to performe it; doe you beside, as you shall finde it most convenient for you. So the bargaine was agreed on betweene them, and nothing else now remained, but to what issue it should sort in the end.

Menghino, on the other side, having entred into the Chamber-maides acquaintance, sped so well with her, that she delivered so many messages from him, as had (already) halfe won the liking of the Virgin; passing further promises to him beside, of bringing him to have conference with her, whensoever her Master should be absent from home. Thus Menghino being favoured (on the one side) by the olde Chamber-maide, and Giovanni (on the other) by trusty Grinello; their amorous warre was now on foote, and diligently followed by both their sollicitors. Within a short while after, by the procurement of Grinello, Jacomino was invited by a Neighbour to supper, in company of divers his familiar friends, whereof intelligence being given to Giovanni; a conclusion passed betweene them, that (upon a certaine signale given) he should come, and finde the doore standing ready open, to give him all accesse unto the affected Mayden.

The appointed night being come, and neither of these hot Lovers knowing the others intent, but their suspection

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being alike, and encreasing still more and more; they made choyce of certaine friends and associates, well armed and provided, for eithers safer entrance when need should require. Menghino stayed with his troope, in a neere neighbouring house to the Mayden, attending when the signall would be given: but Giovanni and his consorts, were ambushed somewhat further off from the house, and both saw when Jacomino went foorth to supper. Now Grinello and the Chamber-maide began to vary, which should send the other out of the way, till they had effected their severall invention; wherupon Grinello said to her. What maketh thee to walke thus about the house, and why doest thou not get thee to bed? And thou (quoth the Maide) why doest thou not goe to attend on our Master, and tarry for his returning home? I am sure thou hast supt long agoe, and I know no businesse here in the house for thee to doe. Thus (by no meanes) the one could send away the other, but either remained as the others hinderance.

But Grinello remembring himselfe, that the houre of his appointment with Giovanni was come, he saide to himselfe. What care I whether our olde Maide be present, or no? If she disclose any thing that I doe, I can be revenged on her when I list. So, having made the signall, he went to open the doore, even when Giovanni (and two of his confederates) rushed into the House, and finding the faire young Maiden sitting in the Hall, laide hands on her, to beare her away. The Damosell began to resist them, crying out for helpe so loude as she could, as the olde Chamber-maide did the like: which Menghino hearing, he ranne thither presently with his friends, and seeing the young Damosell brought well-neere out of the House; they drew their Swords, crying out: Traytors, you are but dead men, here is no violence to be offered, neither is this a booty for such base groomes. So they layed about them lustily, and would not permit them to passe any further. On the other side, upon this mutinous noyse and outcry, the Neighbours came foorth of their houses, with lights, staves, and clubbes, greatly reproving

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them for this out-rage, yet assisting Menghino: by meanes whereof, after a long time of contention, Menghino recovered the Mayden from Giovanni, and placed her peaceably in Jacominoes House.

No sooner was this hurly burly somewhat calmed, but the Serjeants to the Captine of the City, came thither, and apprehended divers of the mutiners: among whom were Menghino, Giovanni, and Grinello, committing them immediately to prison. But after every thing was pacified, and Jacomino returned home to his house from supper; he was not a little offended at so grosse an injury. When he was fully informed, how the matter happened, and apparantly perceived, that no blame at all could be imposed on the Mayden: he grew the better contented, resolving with himselfe (because no more such inconveniences should happen) to have her married so soone as possibly he could.

When morning was come, the kindred and friends on either side, understanding the truth of the errour committed, and knowing beside, what punishment would be inflicted on the prisoners, if Jacomino pressed the matter no further, then as with reason and equity well he might; they repaired to him, and (in gentle speeches) entreated him, not to regard a wrong offered by unruly and youthfull people, meerey drawne into the action by perswasion of friends; submitting both themselves, and the offenders, to such satisfaction as [he] pleased to appoint them. Jacomino, who had seene and observed many things in his time, and was a man of sound understanding, returned them this answer.

Gentlemen, if I were in mine owne Country, as now I am in yours, I would as forwardly confesse my selfe your friend, as here I must needes fall short of any such service, but even as you shall please to command me. But plainely, and without all further ceremonious complement, I must agree to whatsoever you can request; as thinking you to be more injured by me, then any great wrong that I have sustained. Concerning the young Damosell remaining in my House, she is not (as many have imagined) either of Cremona, or Pavia, but borne a Faentine, here in this

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Citie: albeit neither my selfe, she, or he of whome I had her, did ever know it, or yet could learne whose Daughter she was. Wherefore, the suite you make to me, should rather (in duty) be mine to you: for shee is a native of your owne, doe right to her, and then you can doe no wrong unto mee.

When the Gentlemen understood, that the Mayden was borne in Faenza, they marvelled thereat, and after they had thanked Jacomino for his curteous answer; they desired him to let them know, by what meanes the Damosell came into his custody, and how he knew her to be borne in Faenza: when hee, perceiving them attentive to heare him, began in this manner.

Understand worthy Gentlemen, that Guidotto of Cremona, was my companion and deare friend, who growing neere to his death, tolde me that when this City was surprized by the Emperour Frederigo, and all things committed to sacke and spoile; he and certaine of his confederates entred into a House, which they found to bee well furnished with goods, but utterly forsaken of the dwellers, onely this poore Mayden excepted, being then aged but two yeeres, or thereabout. As hee mounted up the steps, with intent to depart from the House; she called him Father, which word moved him so compassionately, that he went backe againe, brought her away with him, and all things of worth which were in the House: going thence afterward to Fano, and there deceasing, hee left her and all his goods to my charge; conditionally, that I should see her married when due time required, and bestow on her the wealth which he had left her. Now, very true it is, although her yeeres are convenient for marriage, yet I could never finde any one to bestow her on, at least that I thought fitting for her: howbeit, I will listen thereto much more respectfully, before any other such accident shall happen.

It came to passe, that in the reporting of this discourse, there was then a Gentleman in the company, named Guillemino da Medicina, who at the surprizall of the City, was present with Guidotto of Cremona, and knew well the

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House which he had ransacked, the owner whereof was also present with him, wherefore taking him aside, he said to him. Bernardino, hearest thou what Jacomino hath related? Yes very well, replied Bernardino, and remember withall, that in that dismall bloody combustion, I lost a little Daughter, about the age as Jacomino speaketh. Questionlesse then replied Guillemino, she must needs be the same young Mayden, for I was there at the same time, and in the House, whence Guidotto did bring both the Girle and goods, and I do perfectly remember, that it was thy House. I pray thee call to minde, if ever thou sawest any scarre or marke about her, which may revive thy former knowledge of her, for my minde perswades me, that the Maide is thy Daughter.

Bernardino musing awhile with himselfe, remembred, that under her left eare, she had a scarre, in the forme of a little crosse, which happened by the byting of a Wolfe, and but a small while before the spoyle was made. Wherefore, without deferring it to any further time, he stept to Jacomino (who as yet stayed there) and entreated him to fetch the Mayden from his house, because shee might be knowne to some in the company: whereto right willingly he condescended, and there presented the Maide before them. So soone as Bernardino beheld her, he began to be much inwardly moved, for the perfect character of her Mothers countenance, was really figured in her sweete face; onely that her beauty was somewhat more excelleng. Yet not herewith satisfied, he desired Jacomino to bee so pleased, as to lift up a little the lockes of haire, depending over her left eare. Jacomino did it presently, albeit with a modest blushing in the Maide, and Bernardino looking advisedly on it, knew it to be the selfe-same crosse, which confirmed her constantly to be his Daughter.

Overcome with excesse of joy, which made the teares to trickle downe his cheekes, he proffered to embrace and kisse the Maide: but she refusing his kindnesse, because (as yet) she knew no reason for it, hee turned himselfe to Jacomino, saying. My deare brother and friend, this Maide is my

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Daughter, and my House was the same which Guidotto spoyled, in the generall havocke of our City, and thence he carried this childe of mine, forgotten (in the fury) by my Wife her Mother. But happy was the houre of his becomming her Father, and carrying her away with him; for else she had perished in the fire, because the House was instantly burnt downe to the ground. The Mayden hearing his words, observing him also to be a man of yeeres and gravity: she beleaved what he saide, and humbly submitted her selfe to his kisses and embraces, even as instructed thereto by instinct of nature. Bernardino instantly sent for his wife, her owne Mother, his daughters, sonnes, and kindred, who being acquainted with this admirable accident, gave her most gracious and kinde welcome, he receiving her from Jacomino as his childe, and the legacies which Guidotto had left her.

When the Captaine of the City (being a very wise and worthy Gentleman) heard these tydings, and knowing that Giovanni, then his prisoner, was the Son to Bernardino, and naturall Brother to the newly recovered Maide: he bethought himselfe, how best he might qualifie the fault committed by him. And entring into the Hall among them, handled the matter so discreetly, that a loving league of peace was confirmed betweene Giovanni and Menghino, to whom (with free and full consent on all sides) the faire Maide, named Agatha, was given in marriage, with a more honourable enlargement of her dowry, and Grinello, with the rest, delivered out of prison, which for their tumultuous riot they had justly deserved. Menghino and Agatha had their wedding worthily solemnized, with all due honours belonging thereto; and long time after they had lived in Faenza, highly beloved, and graciously esteemed.

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Guion di Procida, being found familiarly conversing with a young Damosell, which he loved ; and had beene given (formerly) to Frederigo, King of Sicilie : was bound to a stake, to be consumed with fire. From which danger (neverthesse) he escaped, being knowne by Don Rogiero de Oria, Lord Admirall of Sicilie, and afterward married the Damosell.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

Wherein is manifested, that love can leade a man into numberlesse perils : out of which he escapeth with no meane difficulty.

THE Novell of Madame Neiphila being ended, which proved very pleasing to the Ladies : the Queene commanded Madam Pampinea, that she should prepare to take her turne next, whereto willingly obeying, thus she began. Many and mighty (Gracious Ladies) are the prevailing powers of love, conducting amorous soules into infinite travels, with inconveniences no way avoidable, and not easily to be foreseene, or prevented. As partly already hath bene observed, by divers of our former Novells related, and some (no doubt) to ensue hereafter ; for one of them (comming now to my memory) I shall acquaint you withall, in so good tearmes as I can.

Ischia is an Iland very neere to Naples, wherein (not long since) lived a faire and lovely Gentlewoman, named Restituta, Daughter to a Gentleman of the same Isle, whose name was Marino Bolgaro. A proper youth called Guion, dwelling also in a neere neighbouring Isle, called Procida, did love her as dearly as his owne life, and she was as intimately affected towards him. Now because the sight of her was his onely comfort, as occasion gave him leave, he

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resorted to Ischia very often in the day time, and as often also in the night season, when any Barke passed from Procida to Ischia; if to see nothing else, yet to behold the walles that enclosed his Mistresse thus.

While this love continued in equall fervency, it chanced upon a faire Summers day, that Restituta walked alone upon the Sea-shore, going from Rocke to Rocke, having a naked knife in her hand, wherewith she opened such Oysters as shee found among the stones, seeking for small pearles enclosed in their shelles. Her walke was very solitary and shady, with a faire Spring or Well adjoyning to it, and thither (at that very instant time) certaine Sicilian young Gentlemen, which came from Naples, had made their retreat. They perceiving the Gentlewoman to be very beautifull (she as yet not having any sight of them) and in such a silent place alone by her selfe: concluded together, to make a purchase of her, and carry her thence away with them; as indeed they did, notwithstanding all her out cries and exclames, bearing her perforce aboard their Barke.

Setting sayle thence, they arrived in Calabria, and then there grew a great contention betweene them, to which of them this booty of beauty should belong, because each of them pleaded a title to her. But when they could not grow to any agreement, but doubted greater disasters would ensue thereon, by breaking their former league of friendship: by an equall conformity in consent, they resolved, to bestow her as a rich present, on Frederigo King of Sicilie, who was then young and joviall, and could not be pleased with a better gift; wherefore, they were no sooner landed at Palermo, but they did according as they had determined. The King did commend her beauty extraordinarily, and liked her farre beyond all his other Loves: but, being at that time empaired in his health, and his body much distempered by ill dyet; he gave command, that untill he should be in more able disposition, she must be kept in a goodly house of his owne, erected in a beautifull Garden, called the Cube, where she was attended in most pompous manner.

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Now grew the noyse and rumor great in Ischia, about this rape or stealing away of Restituta; but the chiefest greivance of all, was, that it could not be knowne how, by whom, or by what meanes. But Guion di Procida, whom this injury concerned much more then any other: stood not in expectation of better tydings from Ischia, but hearing what course the Barke had taken, made ready another, to follow after with all possible speede. Flying thus on the winged winds through the Seas, even from Minerva, unto the Scalea in Calabria, searching for his lost Love in every angle: at length it was told him at the Scalea, that shee was carryed away by certaine Sicillian Marriners, to Palermo, whither Guion set sayle immediately.

After some diligent search made there, he understood, that she was delivered to the King, and he had given strict command, for keeping her in his place of pleasure, called the Cube: which newes were not a little greivous to him, for now he was almost quite out of hope, not onely of ever enjoying her, but also of seeing her. Neverthesse, Love would not let him utterly despaire, whereupon he sent away his Barque, and perceiving himselfe to be unknowne of any; he continued for some time in Palermo, walking many times by that goodly place of pleasure. It chanced on a day, that keeping his walke as he used to do, Fortune was so favourable to him, as to let him have a sight of her at her window; from whence also she had a full view of him, to their exceeding comfort and contentment. And Guion observing, that the Cube was seated in a place of small resort; approached so neere as possibly he durst, to have some conference with Restituta.

As Love sets a keene edge on the dullest spirit, and (by a small advantage) makes a man the more adventurous: so this little time of unseene talke, inspired him with courage, and her with witty advice, by what meanes his accesse might be much neerer to her, and their communication concealed from any discovery, the scituation of the place, and benefit of time duly considered. Night must be the cloud to their amorous conclusion, and therefore, so much

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thereof being spent, as was thought convenient, he returned thither againe, provided of such grappling-yrons, as is required when men will clamber, made fast unto his hands and knees; by their helpe hee attained to the top of the wall, whence discending downe into the Garden, there he found the maine yard of a ship, whereof before she had given him instruction, and rearing it up against her Chamber window, made that his meanes for ascending thereto, she having left it open for his easier entrance.

You cannot denie (faire Ladies) but here was a very hopefull beginning, and likely to have as happy an ending, were it not true Loves fatal misery, even in the very height of promised assurance, to be thwarted by unkind prevention, and in such manner as I will tell you. This night, intended for our Lovers meeting, proved disastrous and dreadfull to them both: for the King, who at the first sight of Restituta, was highly pleased with her excelling beauty; gave order to his Eunuches and other women, that a costly bathe should be prepared for her, and therein to let her weare away that night, because the next day he intended to visit her. Restituta being royally conducted from her Chamber to the Bathe, attended on with Torchlight, as if she had bene a Queene: none remained there behind, but such women as waited on her, and the Guards without, which watched the Chamber.

No sooner was poore Guion aloft at the window, calling softly to his Mistresse, as if she had bene there; but he was over-heard by the women in the darke: and immediately apprehended by the Guard, who forthwith brought him before the Lord Marshall, where being examined, and he avouching, that Restituta was his elected wife, and for her he had presumed in that manner; closely was he kept in prison till the next morning. When he came into the Kings presence, and there boldly justified the goodnesse of his cause: Restituta likewise was sent for, who no sooner saw her deare Love Guion, but she ran and caught him fast about the necke, kissing him in teares, and greeving not a little at his hard fortune. Heereat the King grew exceed-

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ingly enraged, loathing and hating her now, much more then formerly hee did affect her, and having himselfe seene by what strange meanes he did climbe over the wall, and then mounted to her Chamber window; he was extreemely impatient, and could not otherwise bee perswaded, but that their meetings thus had bene very many.

Forthwith hee sentenced them both with death, commanding, that they should be conveyed thence to Palermo, and there (being stript starke naked) be bound to a stake backe to backe, and so to stand the full space of nine houres, to see if any could take knowledge, of whence, or what they were; then afterward, to be consumed with fire. The sentence of death, did not so much daunt or dismay the poore Lovers, as the uncivill and unsightly manner, which (in feare of the Kings wrathfull displeasure) no man durst presume to contradict. Wherefore, as he had commanded, so were they carryed thence to Palermo, and bound naked to a stake in the open Market place, and (before their eyes) the fire of wood brought, which was to consume them, according to the houre as the King had appointed. You neede not make any question, what an huge concourse of people were soone assembled together, to behold such a sad and wofull spectacle, even the whole City of Palermo, both men and women. The men were stricken with admiration, beholding the unequalled beauty of faire Restituta, and the selfe-same passion possessed the women, seeing Guion to be such a goodly and compleat young man: but the poore infortunate Lovers themselves, they stood with their lookes dejected to the ground, being much pittied of all, but no way to be holpen or rescued by any, awaiting when the happy houre would come, to finish both their shame and lives together.

During the time of this tragicall expectation, the fame of this publike execution being noysed abroade, calling all people farre and neere to behold it; it came to the eare of Don Rogiero de Oria, a man of much admired valour, and then Lord high Admirall of Sicily, who came himselfe in person, to the place appointed for their death. First, he

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observed the Mayden, confessing her (in his soule) to be a beauty beyond all compare. Then looking on the young man, thus he saide within himselfe: If the inward endowments of the mind, doe paralell the outward perfections of body; the World cannot yeeld a more compleate man. Now, as good natures are quickly incited to compassion (especially in cases almost commanding it) and compassion knocking at the doore of the soule, doth quicken the memory with many passed recordations: so this noble Admirall, advisedly, beholding poore condemned Guion, conceived, that he had somewhat seene him before this instant, and upon this perswasion (even as if divine vertue had tutored his tongue) he saide: Is not thy name Guion di Procida?

Marke now, how quickly misery can receive comfort, upon so poore and silly a question; for Guion began to elevate his dejected countenance, and looking on the Admirall, returned him this answer. Sir, heretofore I have bene the man which you speake of; but now, both that name and man must die with me. What misfortune (said the Admirall) hath thus unkindly crost thee? Love (answered Guion) and the Kings displeasure. Then the Admirall would needs know the whole history at large, which briefly was related to him, and having heard how all had happened; as he was turning his Horse to ride away thence, Guion called to him, saying, Good my Lord, entreat one favour for me, if possibly it may be. What is that? replied the Admirall. You see Sir (quoth Guion) that I am very shortly to breathe my last; all the grace which I do most humbly entreat, is, that as I am here with this chaste Virgin, (whom I honour and love beyond my life) and miserably bound backe to backe: our faces may be turned each to other, to the end, that when the fire shall finish my life, by looking on her, my soule may take her flight in full felicity. The Admirall smiling, said; I will do for thee what I can, and (perhaps) thou mayest so long looke on her, as thou wilt be weary, and desire to looke off her.

At his departure, he commanded them that had the

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charge of this execution, to proceede no further, untill they heard more from the King, to whom he gallopped immediately, and although he beheld him to bee very angrily moved; yet he spared not to speake in this maner. Sir, wherin have those poore young couple offended you, that are so shamefully to be burnt at Palermo? The King told him: whereto the Admirall (pursuing still his purpose) thus replied. Beleeve me Sir, if true love be an offence, then theirs may be termed to be one; and albeit it deserved death, yet farre be it from thee to inflict it on them: for as faults doe justly require punishment, so doe good turnes as equally merit grace and requitall. Knowest thou what and who they are, whom thou hast so dishonourably condemned to the fire? Not I, quoth the King. Why then I will tell thee, answered the Admirall, that thou mayest take the better knowledge of them, and forbear hereafter, to be so over violently transported with anger.

The young Gentleman, is the Sonne to Landolfo di Procida, the onely Brother to Lord John di Procida, by whose meanes thou becamest Lord and King of this Countrey. The faire young Damosell, is the Daughter to Marino Bulgaro, whose power extendeth so farre, as to preserve thy prerogative in Ischia, which (but for him) had long since bene out-rooted there. Beside, these two maine motives, to challenge justly grace and favour from thee; they are in the floure and pride of their youth, having long continued in loyall love together, and compelled by fervency of endeared affection, not any will to displease thy Majesty: they have offended (if it may be termed an offence to love, and in such lovely young people as they are.) Canst thou then finde in thine heart to let them die, whom thou rather ought to honour, and recompence with no meane rewards?

When the King had heard this, and beleeved for a certainty, that the Admirall told him nothing but truth: he appointed not onely, that they should proceede no further, but also was exceeding sorrowfull for what he had done, sending presently to have them released from the Stake, and honourably to be brought before him. Being thus en-

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Theodoro falling in love with Violenta, the Daughter to his Master, named Amarigo, and she conceiving with child by him; was condemned to be hanged. As they were leading him to the Gallows, beating and misusing him all the way: he happened to be knowne of his owne Father, whereupon he was released, and afterward enjoyed Violenta in marriage.

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Wherein is declared, the sundry travels and perillous accidents, occasioned by those two powerfull Commanders, Love and Fortune, the insulting Tyrants over humane life.

GR EATLY were the Ladies minds perplexed, when they heard, that the two poore Lovers were in danger to be burned: but hearing afterward of their happy deliverance, for which they were as joyfull againe; upon the concluding of the Novell, the Queene looked on Madame Lauretta, enjoyning her to tell the next Tale, which willingly she undertooke to do, and thus began.

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Faire Ladies, at such time as the good King William reigned in Sicily, there lived within the same Dominion, a young Gentleman, named Signior Amarigo, Abbot of Trapani, who among his other worldly blessings, (commonly termed the goods of Fortune) was not unfurnished of children; and therefore having neede of servants, he made his provision of them the best he might. At that time, certaine Gallies of Geneway Pyrates comming from the Easterne parts, which coasting along Armenia, had taken divers children; he bought some of them, thinking that they were Turkes. They all resembling clownish Peazants, yet there was one among them, who seemed to be of more tractable and gentle nature, yea, and of a more affable countenance than any of the rest, being named Theodoro: who growing on in yeeres, (albeit he lived in the condition of a servant) was educated among Amarigoes Children, and as enstructed rather by nature, then accident, his conditions were very much commended, as also the feature of his body, which proved so highly pleasing to his Master Amarigo, that he made him a free man, and imagining him to be a Turke, caused him to be baptized, and named Pedro, creating him superintendent of all his affaires, and reposing his chiefest trust in him.

As the other Children of Signior Amarigo grew in yeeres and stature, so did a Daughter of his, named Violenta, a very goodly and beautifull Damosell, somewhat over-long kept from marriage by her Fathers covetousnesse, and casting an eye of good liking on poore Pedro. Now, albeit shee loved him very dearly, and all his behaviour was most pleasing to her, yet maiden modesty forbad her to reveale it, till Love (too long concealed) must needs disclose it selfe. Which Pedro at the length tooke notice of, and grew so forward towards her in equality of affection, as the very sight of her was his onely happinesse. Yet very fearefull he was, least it should be noted, either by any of the House, or the Mayden her selfe: who yet well observed it, and to her no meane contentment, as it appeared no lesse (on the other side) to honest Pedro.

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While thus they loved together meerey in dumbe shewes, not daring to speake to each other, (though nothing more desired) to finde some ease in this their oppressing passions : Fortune, even as if she pittied their so long languishing, enstructed them how to finde out a way, whereby they might both better releve themselves. Signior Amarigo, about some two or three miles distance from Trapani, had a Countrey-House or Farme, whereto his Wife, with her Daughter and some other women, used oftentimes to make their resort, as it were in sportfull recreation ; Pedro alwayes being diligent to man them thither. One time among the rest, it came to passe, as often it falleth out in the Summer season, that the faire Skie became suddenly over-clouded, even as they were returning home towards Trapani, threatening a storme of raine to overtake them, except they made the speedier haste.

Pedro, who was young, and likewise Violenta, went farre more lightly then her Mother and her company, as much perhaps provoked by love, as feare of the sudden raine falling, and paced on so fast before them, that they were wholly out of sight. After many flashes of lightning, and a few dreadfull clappes of thunder, there fell such a tempestuous showre of hayle, as compelled the Mother and her traine to shelter themselves in a poore Countrey-mans Cottage. Pedro and Violenta, having no other refuge, ranne likewise into a poore Sheepe-coate, so over-ruined, as it was in danger to fall on their heads ; and no body dwelt in it, neither stood any other house neere it, and it was scarcely any shelter for them, howbeit, necessity enforceth to make shift with the meanest. The storme encreasing more and more, and they coveting to avoyd it as well as they could ; sighes and drie hemmes were often inter-vented, as dumbly (before) they were wont to doe, when willingly they could afford another kinde of speaking.

At last Pedro tooke heart, and saide : I would this showre would never cease, that I might be alwayes where I am. The like could I wish, answered Violenta, so we were in a better place of safety. These wishes drew on other gentle language,

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with modest kisses and embraces, the onely ease to poore Lovers soules; so that the raine ceased not, till they had taken order for their oftner conversing, and absolute plighting of their faiths together. By this time the storme was fairly over-blowne, and they attending on the way, till the Mother and the rest were come, with whom they returned to Trapani, where by wise and provident meanes, they often conferred in private together, and enjoyed the benefit of their amorous desires, yet free from any ill surmise or suspicion.

But, as Lovers felicities are sildome permanent, without one encountring crosse or other: so these stolne pleasures of Pedro and Violenta, met with as sowre a sauce in the farewell. For, shee proved to be conceived with childe, then which could befall them no heavier affliction, and Pedro fearing to loose his life therefore, determined immediate flight, and revealed his purpose to Violenta. Which when she heard, she told him plainly, that if he fled, forth-with she would kill her selfe. Alas deare Love (quoth Pedro) with what reason can you wish my tarrying here? This conception of yours, doth discover our offence, which a Fathers pity may easily pardon in you: but I being his servant and vassall, shall be punished both for your sinne and mine, because he will have no mercy on me. Content thy selfe Pedro, replied Violenta, I will take such order for mine owne offence, by the discrete counsell of my loving Mother, that no blame shall any way be laide on thee, or so much as a surmise, except thou wilt fondly betray thy selfe. If you can do so, answered Pedro, and constantly maintaine your promise; I will not depart, but see that you prove to bee so good as your word.

Violenta, who had concealed her amisse so long as she could, and saw no other remedy, but now at last it must needes be discovered; went privately to her Mother, and (in teares) revealed her infirmity, humbly craving her pardon, and furtherance in hiding it from her Father. The Mother being extraordinarily displeased, chiding her with many sharpe and angry speeches, would needes know

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with whom shee had thus offended. The Daughter (to keepe Pedro from any detection) forged a Tale of her owne braine, farre from any truth indeede, which her Mother verily beleaving, and willing to preserve her Daughter from shame, as also the fierce anger of her Husband, he being a man of very implacable nature: conveyed her to the Countrey-Farme, whither Signior Amarigo sildome or never resorted, intending (under the shadow of sicknesse) to let her lye in there, without the least suspicion of any in Trapani.

Sinne and shame can never be so closely carryed, or clouded with the greatest cunning; but truth hath a loop-light whereby to discover it, even when it supposeth it selfe in the surest safety. For, on the very day of her deliverance, at such time as the Mother, and some few friends (sworne to secrecy) were about the businesse, Signior Amarigo, having beene in company of other Gentlemen, to flye his Hawke at the River, upon a sudden, (but very unfortunately, albeit hee was alone by himselfe) stept into his Farm-house, even to the next roome where the women were, and heard the new-borne Babe to cry, whereat marvelling not a little, he called for his Wife, to know what young childe cryed in his House. The Mother, amazed at his strange comming thither, which never before he had used to doe, and pittying the wofull distresse of her Daughter, which now could bee no longer covered, revealed what happened to Violenta. But he, being nothing so rash in beliefe, as his Wife was, made answer, that it was impossible for his Daughter to be conceived with childe, because he never observed the least signe of love in her to any man whatsoever, and therefore he would be satisfied in the truth, as shee expected any favour from him, or else there was no other way but death.

The Mother laboured by all meanes she could devise, to pacifie her Husbands fury, which proved all in vaine; for being thus impatiently incensed, he drew foorth his Sword, and stepping with it drawne into the Chamber (where she had bene delivered of a goodly Sonne) he said unto her.

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Either tell me who is the Father of this Bastard, or thou and it shall perish both together. Poore Violenta, lesse respecting her owne life, then she did the childes; forgot her solemne promise made to Pedro, and discovered all. Which when Amarigo had heard, he grew so desperately enraged, that hardly he could forbear from killing her. But after hee had spoken what his fury enstructed him, hee mounted on Horse-backe againe, ryding backe to Trapani, where hee disclosed the injury which Pedro had done him, to a noble Gentleman, named Signior Conrado, who was Captaine for the King over the City.

Before poore Pedro could have any intelligence, or so much as suspected any treachery against him; he was suddenly apprehended, and being called in question, stood not on any deniall, but confessed truly what hee had done: whereupon, within some few dayes after, he was condemned by the Captaine, to be whipt to the place of execution, and afterward to be hanged by the necke. Signior Amarigo, because he would cut off (at one and the same time) not onely the lives of the two poore Lovers, but their childes also; as a franticke man, violently carried from all sense of compassion, even when Pedro was led and whipt to his death: he mingled strong poyson in a Cup of wine, delivering it to a trusty servant of his owne, and a naked Rapier withall, speaking to him in this manner. Goe carry these two presents to my late Daughter Violenta, and tell her from me, that in this instant houre, two severall kinds of death are offered unto her, and one of them she must make choyce of, either to drinke the poyson, and so dye, or to run her body on this Rapiers point, which if she denie to doe, she shall be haled to the publike market place, and presently be burned in the sight of her lewd companion, according as shee hath worthily deserved. When thou hast delivered her this message, take her Bastard brat, so lately since borne, and dash his braines out against the walles, and afterward throw him to my Dogges to feede on.

When the Father had given this cruell sentence, both

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against his owne Daughter, and her young Sonne, the servant readier to do evill, then any good, went to the place where his Daughter was kept. Poore condemned Pedro, (as you have heard) was led whipt to the Gibbet, and passing (as it pleased the Captaines Officers to guide him) by a faire Inne: at the same time were lodged there three chiefe persons of Arminia, whom the King of the Countrey had sent to Rome, as Ambassadors to the Popes Holinesse, to negotiate about an important busnesse neerely concerning the King and State. Reposing there for some few dayes, as being much wearied with their journey, and highly honoured by the Gentlemen of Trapani, especially Signior Amarigo; these Ambassadors standing in their Chamber window, heard the wofull lamentations of Pedro in his passage by.

Pedro was naked from the middle upward, and his hands bound fast behind him, but being well observed by one of the Ambassadors, a man aged, and of great authority, named Phinio: hee espied a great red spot upon his breast, not painted, or procured by his punishment, but naturally imprinted in the flesh, which women (in these parts) terme the Rose. Upon the sight hereof, he suddenly remembered a Sonne of his owne, which was stolne from him about fiftene yeeres before, by Pyrates on the Sea-coast of Laiazzo, never hearing any tydings of him afterward. Upon further consideration, and comparing his Sonnes age with the likelihood of this poore wretched mans; thus he conferred with his owne thoughts. If my Sonne (quoth he) be living, his age is equall to this mans time, and by the red blemish on his breast, it plainly speakes him for to bee my Sonne.

Moreover, thus he conceived, that if it were he, he could not but remember his owne name, his Fathers, and the Armenian Language; wherefore, when he was just opposite before the window, hee called aloud to him, saying: Theodoro. Pedro hearing the voyce, presently lifted up his head, and Phenio speaking Armenian, saide: Of whence art thou, and what is thy Fathers name? The Sergeants

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(in reverence to the Lord Ambassador) stayed awhile, till Pedro had returned his answer, who saide. I am an Armenian borne, Sonne to one Phineo, and was brought hither I cannot tell by whom. Phineo hearing this, knew then assuredly, that this was the same Sonne which he had lost; wherefore, the teares standing in his eyes with conceite of joy, downe he descended from the window, and the other Ambassadors with him, running in among the Sergeants to embrace his Sonne, and casting his owne rich Cloake about his whipt body, entreating them to forbear and proceed no further, till they heard what command he should returne withall unto them; which very willingly they promised to do.

Already, by the generall rumour dispersed abroad, Phineo had understood the occasion, why Pedro was thus punished, and sentenced to bee hanged: wherefore, accompanied with his fellow Ambassadors, and all their attending traine, he went to Signior Conrado, and spake thus to him. My Lord, he whom you have sent to death as a slave, is a free Gentleman borne, and my Sonne, able to make her amends whom he hath dishonoured, by taking her in marriage as his lawfull Wife. Let me therefore entreat you, to make stay of the execution, untill it may be knowne, whether she will accept him as her Husband, or no; least (if she be so pleased) you offend directly against your owne Law. When Signior Conrado heard, that Pedro was Sonne to the Lord Ambassador, he wondred thereat not a little, and being somewhat ashamed of his fortunes error, confessed, that the claime of Phineo was conformable to Law, and ought not to be denied him; going presently to the Counsell Chamber, sending for Signior Amarigo immediately thither, and acquainting him fully with the case.

Amarigo, who beleaved that his Daughter and her Child were already dead, was the wofullest man in the World, for his so rash proceeding, knowing very well, that if she were not dead, the scandall would easily be wipt away with credit. Wherefore he sent in all poast haste, to the place where his Daughter lay, that if his command were not

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already executed, by no meanes to have it done at all. He who went on this speedy errand, found there Signior Amarigoes servant standing before Violenta, with the Cup of poyson in the one hand, and the drawne Rapier in the other, reproaching her with very foule and injurious speeches, because she had delayed the time so long, and would not accept the one or other, striving (by violence) to make her take the one. But hearing his Masters command to the contrary, he left her, and returned backe to him, certifying him how the case stood.

Most highly pleased was Amarigo with these glad newes, and going to the Ambassadors Phineo, in teares excused himselfe (so well as he could) for his severity, and craving pardon; assured him, that if Theodoro would accept his Daughter in marriage, willingly he would bestow her on him. Phineo allowed his excuses to be tollerable, and saide beside; If my Son will not marry your Daughter, then let the sentence of death be executed on him. Amarigo and Phineo being thus accorded, they went to poore Theodoro, fearefully looking every minute when he should dye, yet joyfull that he had found his Father, who presently moved the question to him. Theodoro hearing that Violenta should bee his Wife, if he would so accept her: was over come with such exceeding joy, as if he had leapt out of hell into Paradise; confessing, that no greater felicity could befall him, if Violenta her selfe were so well pleased as he.

The like motion was made to her, to understand her disposition in this case, who hearing what good hap had befallen Theodoro, and now in like manner must happen to her: whereas not long before, when two such violent deaths were prepared for her, and one of them shee must needs embrace, she accounted her misery beyond all other womens, but she now thought her selfe above all in happiness, if she might be wife to her beloved Theodoro, submitting her selfe wholly to her Fathers disposing. The marriage being agreed on betweene them, it was celebrated with great pompe and solemnity, a generall Feast being

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made for all the Citizens, and the young married couple nourished up their sweete Son, which grew to be a very comely childe.

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After that the Embassie was dispatched at Rome, and Phineo (with the rest) was returned thither againe; Violenta did reverence him as her owne naturall Father, and he was not a little proud of so lovely a Daughter, beginning a fresh feasting againe, and continuing the same a whole moneth together. Within some short while after, a Galley being fairely furnished for the purpose, Phineo, his Sonne, Daughter, and their young Sonne, went aboard, sayling away thence to Laiazzo, where afterward they lived in much tranquility.

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NOVELL VIII

Anastasio, a Gentleman of the Family of the Honesti, by loving the Daughter to Signior Paulo Traversario, lavishly wasted a great part of his substance, without receiving any love from her againe. By perswasion of some of his kindred and friends, he went to a Countrey dwelling of his, called Chiasso, where he saw a Knight desperately pursue a young Damosell; whom he slew, and afterward gave her to be devoured by his Hounds. Anastasio invited his friends, and hers also whom he so dearely loved, to take part of a dinner with him, who likewise saw the same Damosell so torne in peeces: which his unkind Love perceiving, and fearing least the like ill fortune should happen to her; she accepted Anastasio to be her Husband.

THE EIGHTH NOVELL

Declaring, that Love not onely makes a man prodigall, but also an enemy to himselfe. Moreover, adventure oftentimes bringeth such matters to passe, as wit and cunning in man can never comprehend.

SO soone as Madam Lauretta held her peace, Madam Pampinea (by the Queenes command) began, and said. Lovely Ladies, as pittie is most highly commended in our sexe, even so is cruelty in us as severely revenged (oftentimes) by divine ordination. Which that you may the better know, and learne likewise to shun, as

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a deadly evill ; I purpose to make apparant by a Novell, no lesse full of compassion, then delectable.

Ravenna being a very ancient City in Romania, there dwelt sometime a great number of worthy Gentlemen, among whom I am to speake of one more especially, named Anastasio, descended from the Family of the Honesti, who by the death of his Father, and an Uncle of his, was left extraordinarily abounding in riches, and growing to yeares fitting for marriage, (as young Gallants are easily apt enough to do) he became enamored of a very bountifull Gentlewoman, who was Daughter to Signior Paulo Traversario, one of the most ancient and noble Families in all the Countrey. Nor made he any doubt, but by his meanes and industrious endeavour, to derive affection from her againe ; for he carried himselfe like a brave-minded Gentleman, liberall in his expences, honest and affable in all his actions, which commonly are the true notes of a good nature, and highly to be commended in any man. But, howsoever Fortune became his enemy, these laudable parts of manhood did not any way friend him, but rather appeared hurtfull to himselfe : so cruell, unkind, and almost meerely savage did she shew her self to him ; perhaps in pride of her singular beauty, or presuming on her nobility by birth, both which are rather blemishes, then ornaments in a woman, especially when they be abused.

The harsh and uncivill usage in her, grew very distastefull to Anastasio, and so unsufferable, that after a long time of fruitlesse service, requited still with nothing but coy disdaine ; desperate resolutions entred into his brain, and often he was minded to kill himselfe. But better thoughts supplanting those furious passions, he abstained from any such violent act ; and governed by more manly consideration, determined, that as shee hated him, he would requite her with the like, if he could : wherein he became altogether deceived, because as his hopes grew to a dayly decaying, yet his love enlarged it selfe more and more.

Thus Anastasio persevering still in his bootlesse affection,

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and his expences not limited within any compasse; it appeared in the judgement of his Kindred and Friends, that he was falne into a mighty consumption, both of his body and meanes. In which respect, many times they advised him to leave the City of Ravenna, and live in some other place for such a while; as might set a more moderate stint upon his spendings, and bridle the indiscreete course of his love, the onely fuell which fed this furious fire.

Anastasio held out thus a long time, without lending an eare to such friendly counsell: but in the end, he was so neerely followed by them, as being no longer able to deny them, he promised to accomplish their request. Whereupon, making such extraordinary preparation, as if he were to set thence for France or Spaine, or else into some further distant countrey: he mounted on horsebacke, and accompanied with some few of his familiar friends, departed from Ravenna, and rode to a countrey dwelling house of his owne, about three or foure miles distant from the Cittie, which was called Chiasso, and there (upon a very goodly greene) erecting divers Tents and Pavillions, such as great persons make use of in the time of a Progresse: he said to his friends, which came with him thither, that there he determined to make his abiding, they all returning backe unto Ravenna, and might come to visite him againe so often as they pleased.

Now, it came to passe, that about the beginning of May, it being then a very milde and serrene season, and he leading there a much more magnificent life, then ever hee had done before, inviting divers to dine with him this day, and as many to morrow, and not to leave him till after supper: upon the sodaine, falling into remembrance of his cruell Mistris, hee commanded all his servants to forbear his company, and suffer him to walke alone by himselfe awhile, because he had occasion of private meditations, wherein he would not (by any meanes) be troubled. It was then about the ninth houre of the day, and he walking on solitary all alone, having gone some halfe miles distance from his Tents, entred into a Grove of Pine-trees, never

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minding dinner time, or any thing else, but onely the unkind requitall of his love.

Sodainly he heard the voice of a woman, seeming to make most mournfull complaints, which breaking off his silent considerations, made him to lift up his head, to know the reason of this noise. When he saw himselfe so farre entred into the Grove, before he could imagine where he was; hee looked amazedly round about him, and out of a little thicket of bushes and briars, round engirt with spreading trees, hee espyed a young Damosell come running towards him, naked from the middle upward, her haire dishevelled on her shoulders, and her faire skinne rent and torne with the briars and brambles, so that the blood ran trickling downe mainely; she weeping, wringing her hands, and crying out for mercy so lowde as she could. Two fierce Blood-hounds also followed swiftly after, and where their teeth tooke hold, did most cruelly bite her. Last of all (mounted on a lusty blacke Courser) came gallopping a Knight, with a very sterne and angry countenance, holding a drawne short Sword in his hand, giving her very vile and dreadfull speeches, and threatning every minute to kill her.

This strange and uncouth sight, bred in him no meane admiration, as also kinde compassion to the unfortunate woman; out of which compassion, sprung an earnest desire, to deliver her (if he could) from a death so full of anguish and horror: but seeing himselfe to be without Armes, he ran and pluckt up the plant of a Tree, which handling as if it had bene a staffe, he opposed himselfe against the Dogges and the Knight, who seeing him comming, cryed out in this manner to him. Anastasio, put not thy selfe in any opposition, but referre to my Hounds and me, to punish this wicked woman as she hath justly deserved. And in speaking these words, the Hounds tooke fast hold on her body, so staying her, untill the Knight was come neerer to her, and alighted from his horse: when Anastasio (after some other angry speeches) spake thus unto him: I cannot tell what or who thou art, albeit thou takest such

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knowledge of me, yet I must say, that it is meere cowardize in a Knight, being armed as thou art, to offer to kill a naked woman, and make thy dogges thus to seize on her, as if she were a savage beast; therefore beleeeve me, I will defend her so farre as I am able.

Anastasio, answered the Knight, I am of the same City as thou art, and do well remember, that thou wast a little Ladde, when I (who was then named Guido Anastasio, and thine Unckle) became as intirely in love with this woman, as now thou art of Paulo Traversarioes daughter. But through her coy disdaine and cruelty, such was my, heavy fate, that desperately I slew my selfe with this short sword which thou beholdest in mine hand: for which rash sinfull deede, I was, and am condemned to eternall punishment. This wicked woman, rejoycing immeasurably in mine unhappy death, remained no long time alive after me, and for her mercillesse sinne of cruelty, and taking pleasure in my oppressing torments; dying unrepentant, and in pride of her scorne, she had the like sentence of condemnation pronounced on her, and sent to the same place where I was tormented.

There the three impartiall Judges, imposed this further infliction on us both; namely, that she should flye in this manner before me, and I (who loved her so deerely while I lived) must pursue her as my deadly enemy, not like a woman that had a taste of love in her. And so often as I can overtake her, I am to kill her with this sword, the same Weapon wherewith I slew my selfe. Then am I enjoyned, therewith to open her accursed body, and teare out her hard and frozen heart, with her other inwards, as now thou seest me doe, which I give unto my Hounds to feede on. Afterward, such is the appointment of the supream powers, that she re-assumeth life againe, even as if she had not bene dead at all, and falling to the same kinde of flight, I with my Hounds am still to follow her; without any respite or intermission. Every Friday, and just at this houre, our course is this way, where she suffereth the just punishment inflicted on her. Nor do we rest any

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of the other dayes, but are appointed unto other places, where she cruelly executed her malice against me, being now (of her deare affectionate friend) ordained to be her endlesse enemy, and to pursue her in this manner for so many yeares, as she exercised moneths of cruelty towards me. Hinder me not then, in being the executioner of divine justice; for all thy interposition is but in vaine, in seeking to crosse the appointment of supream powers.

Anastasio having attentively heard all this discourse, his haire stood upright like Porcupines quills, and his soule was so shaken with the terror, that he stept backe to suffer the Knight to do what he was enjoyned, looking yet with milde commisseration on the poore woman. Who kneeling most humbly before the Knight, and stearnely seized on by the two blood-hounds, he opened her brest with his weapon, drawing foorth her heart and bowels, which instantly he threw to the dogges, and they devoured them very greedily. Soone after, the Damosell (as if none of this punishment had bene inflicted on her) started up sodainly, running amaine towards the Sea shore, and the Hounds swiftly following her, as the Knight did the like, after he had taken his sword, and was mounted on horsebacke; so that Anastasio had soone lost all sight of them, and could not gesse what was become of them.

After he had heard and observed all these things, he stoode a while as confounded with feare and pittie, like a simple silly man, hoodwinkt with his owne passions, not knowing the subtle enemies cunning illusions in offering false suggestions to the sight, to worke his owne ends thereby, and encrease the number of his deceived servants. Forthwith he perswaded himselfe, that he might make good use of this womans tormenting, so justly imposed on the Knight to prosecute, if thus it should continue still every Friday. Wherefore, setting a good note or marke upon the place, he returned backe to his owne people, and at such time as he thought convenient, sent for divers of his kindred and friends from Ravenna, who being present with him, thus he spake to them.

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NOVELL VIII

Deare Kinsmen and Friends, ye have a long while importuned me, to discontinue my over-doating love to her, whom you all thinke, and I find to be my mortall enemy: as also, to give over my lavish expences, wherein I confesse my selfe too prodigall; both which requests of yours, I will condescend to, provided, that you will performe one gracious favour for me; Namely, that on Friday next, Signior Paulo Traversario, his wife, daughter, with all other women linked in linage to them, and such beside onely as you shall please to appoint, will vouchsafe to accept a dinner heere with me; as for the reason thereto mooving me, you shall then more at large be acquainted withall. This appeared no difficult matter for them to accomplish: wherefore, being returned to Ravenna, and as they found the time answerable to their purpose, they invited such as Anastasio had appointed them. And although they found it some-what an hard matter, to gaine her company whom he so deerely affected; yet notwithstanding, the other women won her along with them.

A most magnificent dinner had Anastasio provided, and the tables were covered under the Pine-trees, where he saw the cruell Lady so pursued and slaine: directing the guests so in their seating, that the yong Gentlewoman his unkinde Mistresse, sate with her face opposite unto the place, where the dismall spectacle was to be seene. About the closing up of dinner, they beganne to heare the noise of the poore prosecuted Woman, which drove them all to much admiration; desiring to know what it was, and no one resolving them, they arose from the Tables, and looking directly as the noise came to them, they espyed the wofull Woman, the Dogges eagerly pursuing her; and the armed Knight on horsebacke, gallopping fiercely after them with his drawne weapon, and came very nere unto the company, who cryed out with lowd exclames against the dogs and the Knight, stepping forth in assistance of the injured woman.

The Knight spake unto them, as formerly he had done to Anastasio, (which made them draw backe, possessed with feare and admiration) acting the same cruelty as he did the

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Friday before, not differing in the least degree. Most of the Gentlewomen there present, being neere allyed to the unfortunate Woman, and likewise to the Knight, remembering well both his love and death, did shed teares as plentifully, as if it had bin to the very persons themselves, in usuall performance of the action indeede. Which tragicall Scene being passed over, and the Woman and Knight gone out of their sight: all that had seene this straunge accident, fell into diversity of confused opinions, yet not daring to disclose them, as doubting some further danger to ensue thereon.

But beyond all the rest, none could compare in feare and astonishment with the cruell yong Maide affected by Anastasio, who both saw and observed all with a more inward apprehension, knowing very well, that the morall of this dismall spectacle, carried a much neerer application to her then any other in all the company. For now she could call to mind, how unkinde and cruell she had shewne her selfe to Anastasio, even as the other Gentlewoman formerly did to her Lover, still flying from him in great contempt and scorne: for which, she thought the Blood-hounds also pursued her at the heeles already, and a sword of vengeance to mangle her body. This feare grew so powerfull in her, that to prevent the like heavy doome from falling on her, she studied (by all her best and commendable meanes, and therein bestowed all the night season) how to change her hatred into kinde love, which at the length she fully obtained, and then purposed to prosecute in this manner.

Secretly she sent a faithfull Chamber-maide of her owne, to greete Anastasio on her behalfe; humbly entreating him to come see her: because now she was absolutely determined, to give him satisfaction in all which (with honour) he could request of her. Whereunto Anastasio answered, that he accepted her message thankfully, and desired no other favour at her hand, but that which stood with her owne offer, namely, to be his Wife in honourable marriage. The Maide knowing sufficiently, that he could not be more desirous of the match, then her Mistresse shewed her selfe to be, made

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NOVELL VIII answer in her name, that this motion would be most welcome to her.

Heereupon, the Gentlewoman her selfe, became the solicitor to her Father and Mother, telling them plainly, that she was willing to be the Wife of Anastasio: which newes did so highly content them, that upon the Sunday next following, the marriage was very worthily solemnized, and they lived and loved together very kindly. Thus the divine bounty, out of the malignant enemies secret machinations, can cause good effects to arise and succede. For, from this conceite of fearfull imagination in her, not onely happened this long desired conversion, of a Maide so obstinately scornfull and proud; but likewise all the women of Ravenna (being admonished by her example) grew afterward more kind and tractable to mens honest motions, then ever they shewed themselves before. And let me make some use hereof (faire Ladies) to you, not to stand over-nicely conceited of your beauty and good parts, when men (growing enamored of you by them) sollicite you with their best and humblest services. Remember then this disdainfull Gentlewoman, but more especially her, who being the death of so kinde a Lover, was therefore condemned to perpetuall punishment, and he made the minister thereof, whom she had cast off with coy disdain, from which I wish your minds to be as free, as mine is ready to do you any acceptable service.

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Frederigo, of the Alberighi Family, loved a Gentlewoman, and was not requited with like love againe. By bountifull expences, and over liberall invitations, he wasted and consumed all his lands and goods, having nothing left him, but a Hawke or Faulcon. His unkinde Mistresse happeneth to come visite him, and he not having any other foode for her dinner; made a dainty dish of his Faulcone for her to feede on. Being conquered by this exceeding kinde courtesie; she changed her former hatred towards him, accepting him as her Husband in marriage, and made him a man of wealthy possessions.

THE NINTH NOVELL

Wherein is figured to the life, the notable kinnesse and courtesie, of a true and constant Lover: As also the magnanimous minde of a famous Lady.

MADAM PHILOMENA having finished her discourse, the Queene perceiving, that her turne was the next, in regard of the priviledge granted to Dioneus; with a smiling countenance thus she spake. Now or never am I to maintaine the order which was instituted when wee began this commendable exercise, whereto I yeeld with all humble obedience. And (worthy Ladies) I am to acquaint you with a Novell, in some sort answerable to the precedent, not onely to let you know, how powerfully your kindnesses do prevaile, in such as have a free and gentle soule: but also to advise you, in being bountifull, where

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vertue doth justly challenge it. And evermore, let your favours shine on worthy deservers, without the direction of chaunce or Fortune, who never bestoweth any gift by discretion; but rashly without consideration, even to the first she blindly meets withall.

You are to understand then, that Coppo di Borghese Domenichi, who was of our owne City, and perhaps (as yet) his name remaineth in great and reverend authority, now in these dayes of ours, as well deserving eternall memory; yet more for his vertues and commendable qualities, then any boast of Nobility from his predecessors. This man, being well entred into yeares, and drawing towards the finishing of his dayes; it was his only delight and felicity, in conversation among his neighbours, to talke of matters concerning antiquity, and some other things within compasse of his owne knowledge: which he would deliver in such singular order, (having an absolute memory) and with the best Language, as very few or none could do the like. Among the multiplicity of his quaint discourses, I remember he told us, that sometime there lived in Florence a yong Gentleman, named Frederigo, Sonne to Signior Phillippo Alberigo, who was held and reputed, both for Armes, and all other actions beseeeming a Gentleman, hardly to have his equall through all Tuscany.

This Frederigo (as it is no rare matter in yong Gentlemen) became enamored of a Gentlewoman, named Madam Giana, who was esteemed (in her time) to be the fairest and most gracious Lady in all Florence. In which respect, and to reach the height of his desire, he made many sumptuous Feasts and Banquets, Joustes, Tilties, Tournaments, and all other noble actions of Armes, beside, sending her infinite rich and costly presents, making spare of nothing, but lashing all out in lavish expence. Notwithstanding, she being no lesse honest then faire, made no reckoning of whatsoever he did for her sake, or the least respect of his owne person. So that Frederigo, spending thus daily more, then his meanes and ability could maintaine, and no supplies any way redounding to him, or his faculties (as very easily they might)

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diminished in such sort, that he became so poore; as he had nothing left him, but a small poore Farme to live upon, the silly revenewes whereof were so meane, as scarcely allowed him meat and drinke; yet had he a faire Hawke or Faulcon, hardly any where to be fellowed, so expeditious and sure she was of flight. His low ebbe and poverty, no way quailing his love to the Lady, but rather setting a keener edge thereon; he saw the City life could no longer containe him, where most he coveted to abide: and therefore, betooke himselfe to his poore Countrey Farme, to let his Faulcon get him his dinner and supper, patiently supporting his penurious estate, without suite or meanes making to one, for helpe or reliefe in any such necessity.

While thus he continued in this extremity, it came to passe, that the Husband to Madam Giana fell sicke, and his debility of body being such, as little, or no hope of life remained: he made his last will and testament, ordaining thereby, that his Sonne (already growne to indifferent stature) should be heire to all his Lands and riches, wherein he abounded very greatly. Next unto him, if he chanced to die without a lawfull heire, he substituted his Wife, whom most dearly he affected, and so departed out of this life. Madam Giana being thus left a widdow; as commonly it is the custome of our City Dames, during the Summer season, she went to a house of her owne in the Countrey, which was somewhat neere to poore Frederigoes Farme, and where he lived in such an honest kind of contented poverty.

Hereupon, the young Gentleman her Sonne, taking great delight in Hounds and Hawkes; grew into familiarity with poore Frederigo, and having seene many faire flights of his Faulcon, they pleased him so extraordinarily, that he earnestly desired to enjoy her as his owne; yet durst not move the motion for her, because he saw how choycely Frederigo esteemed her. Within a short while after, the young Gentleman, became very sicke, whereat his Mother greeved exceedingly, (as having no more but he, and therefore loved him the more entirely) never parting from him night or day, comforting him so kindly as she could, and

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demanding, if he had a desire to any thing, willing him to reveale it, and assuring him withall, that (if it were within the compasse of possibility) he should have it. The youth hearing how many times she had made him these offers, and with such vehement protestations of performance, at last thus spake.

. Mother (quoth he) if you can do so much for me, as that I may have Frederigoes Faulcon, I am perswaded, that my sicknesse soone will cease. The Lady hearing this, sate some short while musing to her selfe, and began to consider, what she might best doe to compasse her Sonnes desire: for well she knew, how long a time Frederigo had most lovingly kept it, not suffering it ever to be out of his sight. Moreover, shee remembred, how earnest in affection he had bene to her, never thinking himselfe happy, but onely when he was in her company; wherefore, shee entred into this private consultation with her owne thoughts. Shall I send, or goe my selfe in person, to request the Faulcon of him, it being the best that ever flew? It is his onely Jewell of delight, and that taken from him, no longer can he wish to live in this World. How farre then voyde of understanding shall I shew my selfe, to rob a Gentleman of his sole felicity, having no other joy or comfort left him? These and the like considerations, wheeled about her troubled braine, onely in tender care and love to her Sonne, perswading her selfe assuredly, that the Faulcon were her owne, if she would but request it: yet not knowing whereon it were best to resolve, shee returned no answer to her Sonne, but sate still in her silent meditations. At the length, love to the youth, so prevailed with her, that she concluded on his contentation, and (come of it what could) shee would not send for it; but go her selfe in person to request it, and then returne home againe with it: whereupon thus she spake. Sonne, comfort thy selfe, and let languishing thoughts no longer offend thee: for here I promise thee, that the first thing I do to morrow morning, shall bee my journey for the Faulcon, and assure thy selfe, that I will bring it with me.

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Whereat the youth was so joyed, that he imagined, his sicknesse began instantly a little to leave him, and promised him a speedy recovery.

Somewhat early the next morning, the Lady, in care of her sicke Sons health, was up and ready betimes, and taking another Gentlewoman with her; onely as a morning recreation, shee walked to Frederigoes poore Countrey Farme, knowing that it would not a little glad him to see her. At the time of her arrivall there, he was (by chance) in a silly Garden, on the backe-side of the House, because (as yet) it was no convenient time for flight: but when he heard, that Madam Giana was come thither, and desired to have some conference with him; as one almost confounded with admiration, in all hast he ran to her, and saluted her with most humble reverence. She in all modest and gracious manner, requited him with the like salutations, thus speaking to him. Signior Frederigo, your owne best wishes befriend you, I am now come hither, to recompence some part of your passed travailes, which heretofore you pretended to suffer for my sake, when your love was more to me, then did well become you to offer, or my selfe to accept. And such is the nature of my recompence, that I make my selfe your guest, and meane this day to dine with you, as also this Gentlewoman, making no doubt of our welcome: whereto, with lowly reverence, thus he replied.

Madam, I doe not remember, that ever I sustained any losse or hinderance by you, but rather so much good, as if I was worth any thing, it proceeded from your great deservings, and by the service in which I did stand engaged to you. But my present happinesse can no way be equalled, derived from your super-abounding gracious favour, and more then common course of kindnesse, vouchsafing (of your owne liberall nature) to come and visit so poore a servant. Oh that I had as much to spend againe, as heretofore riotously I have runne thorow: what a welcome would your poore Host bestow upon you, for gracing this homely house with your divine presence? With these

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wordes, he conducted her into his house, and then into his simple Garden, where having no convenient company for her, he said. Madam, the poverty of this place is such, that it affordeth none fit for your conversation: this poore woman, wife to an honest Husbandman will attend on you, while I (with some speede) shall make ready dinner.

Poore Frederigo, although his necessity was extreame, and his greefe great, remembring his former inordinate expences, a moity whereof would now have stood him in some stead; yet he had a heart as free and forward as ever, not a jotte dejected in his minde, though utterly overthrowne by Fortune. Alas! how was his good soule afflicted, that he had nothing wherewith to honour his Lady? Up and downe he runnes, one while this way, then againe another, exclaiming on his disastrous Fate, like a man enraged, or bereft of senses: for he had not one peny of mony neither pawne or pledge, wherewith to procure any. The time hasted on, and he would gladly (though in meane measure) expresse his honourable respect of the Lady. To begge of any, his nature denied it, and to borrow he could not, because his neighbours were all as needie as himselfe.

At last, looking round about, and seeing his Faulcon standing on her perch, which he felt to be very plumpe and fat, being voyde of all other helps in his neede, and thinking her to be a Fowle meete for so Noble a Lady to feede on: without any further demurring or delay, he pluckt off her necke, and caused the poore woman presently to pull her Feathers: which being done, he put her on the spit, and in short time she was daintily roasted. Himselfe covered the Table, set bread and salt on and laid the Napkins, whereof he had but a few left him. Going then with chearfull looks into the Garden, telling the Lady that dinner was ready, and nothing now wanted, but her presence. Shee, and the Gentlewoman went in, and being sated at the Table, not knowing what they fed on, the Faulcon was all their foode; and Frederigo not a little joyfull, that his credite was so well saved. When they

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were risen from the table, and had spent some small time in familiar conference: the Lady thought it fit, to acquaint him with the reason of her comming thither, and therefore (in very kinde manner) thus began.

Frederigo, if you do yet remember your former carriage towards mee, as also my many modest and chaste denials, which (perhaps) you thought to savour of a harsh, cruell, and un-womanly nature, I make no doubt, but you will wonder at my present presumption, when you understand the occasion, which expressly mooved me to come hither. But if you were possessed of children, or ever had any, whereby you might comprehend what love (in nature) is due unto them: then I durst assure my selfe, that you would partly hold me excused.

Now, in regard that you never had any, and my selfe (for my part) have but onely one, I stand not exempted from those Lawes, which are in common to other mothers. And being compelled to obey the power of those Lawes; contrary to mine owne will, and those duties which reason ought to maintaine, I am to request such a gift of you, which I am certaine, that you do make most precious account of, as in manly equity you can do no lesse. For Fortune hath bin so extreemly adverse to you, that she hath robbed you of all other pleasures, allowing you no comfort or delight, but onely that poore one, which is your faire Faulcone. Of which Bird, my Sonne is become so strangely desirous, as, if I doe not bring it to him at my comming home; I feare so much, the extreamity of his sicknesse, as nothing can ensue thereon, but his losse of life. Wherefore I beseech you, not in regard of the love you have borne me, for therby you stand no way obliged: but in your owne true gentle nature (the which hath alwayes declared it selfe ready in you, to do more kinde offices generally, then any other Gentleman that I know) you will be pleased to give her me, or at the least, let me buy her of you. Which if you do, I shall freely then confesse, that onely by your meanes, my Sonnes life is saved, and we both shall for ever remaine engaged to you.

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When Frederigo had heard the Ladies request, which was now quite out of his power to graunt, because it had bene her service at dinner: he stood like a man meerely dilled in his sences, the teares trickling amaine downe his cheekes, and he not able to utter one word. Which she perceiving, began to conjecture immediately, that these teares and passions proceeded rather from greefe of minde, as being loather to part with his Faulcon, then any other kinde of manner: which made her ready to say, that she would not have it. Neverthelesse she did not speake, but rather tarried to attend his answer. Which, after some small respite and pause, he returned in this manner.

Madame, since the houre, when first mine affection became soly devoted to your service; Fortune hath bene crosse and contrary to me, in many occasions, as justly, and in good reason I may complain of her, yet all seemed light and easie to be indured, in comparison of her present malicious contradiction, to my utter overthrow, and perpetuall mollestation. Considering, that you are come hither to my poore house, which (while I was rich and able) you would not so much as vouchsafe to looke on. And now you have requested a small matter of me, wherein she hath also most crookedly thwarted me, because she hath disabled me, in bestowing so meane a gift, as your selfe will confesse, when it shall be related to you in few words.

So soone as I heard, that it was your gracious pleasure to dine with me, having regard to your excellency, and what (by merit) is justly due unto you: I thought it a part of my bounden duty, to entertaine you with such exquisite viands, as my poore power could any way compasse, and farre beyond respect or welcome, to other common and ordinary persons. Whereupon, remembring my Faulcon, which now you aske for; and her goodnesse, excelling all other of her kinde; I supposed, that she would make a dainty dish for your dyet, and having drest her, so well as I could devise to do: you have fed heartily on her, and I am proud that I have so well bestowne her. But perceiving now, that you would have her for your sicke

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Sonne; it is no meane affliction to me, that I am disabled of yeelding you contentment, which all my life time I have desired to doe.

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To approve his words, the feathers, feete, and beake were brought in, which when she saw, she greatly blamed him for killing so rare a Faulcon, to content the appetite of any woman whatsoever. Yet she commended his height of spirit, which poverty had no power to abase. Lastly, her hopes being frustrate for enjoying the Faulcon, and fearing besides the health of her Sonne, she thanked Frederigo for his honorable kindnesse, returning home againe sad and melancholly. Shortly after, her sonne either greiving that he could not have the Faulcon, or by extreimity of his disease, chanced to dye, leaving his mother a most wofull Lady.

After so much time was expired, as conveniently might agree with sorrow, and mourning; her Brethren made many motions to her, to joyne her selfe in marriage againe, because she was extraordinarily rich, and as yet but yong in yeares. Now although she was well contented never to be married any more; yet being continually importuned by them, and remembring the honorable honesty of Frederigo, his last poore, yet magnificent dinner, in killing his Faulcon for her sake, she saide to her Brethren. This kind of widdowed estate doth like me so well, as willingly I would never leave it: but seeing you are so earnest for my second marriage, let me plainly tell you, that I will never accept of any other husband, but onely Frederigo di Alberino.

Her Brethren in scornefull manner reprooved her, telling her, that he was a begger, and had nothing left to keepe him in the world. I know it well (quoth she) and am heartily sorry for it. But give me a man that hath neede of wealth, rather then wealth that hath neede of a man. The Brethren hearing how she stood addicted, and knowing Frederigo to be a worthy Gentleman, though poverty had disgraced him in the World: consented thereto, so she bestowed her selfe and her riches on him. He on the other side, having so noble a Lady to his Wife, and the

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL IX same whom he had so long and deerely loved, submitted all his fairest Fortunes unto her, became a better husband (for the world) then before, and they lived, and loved together in equall joy and happinesse.

Pedro di Vinciolo went to sup at a friends house in the City. His wife (in the meane while) had a young man whom shee loved, at supper with her. Pedro returning home on a sodaine, the young man was hidden under a Coope for Hens. Pedro in excuse of his so soone comming home, declareth, how in the house of Herculano (with whom he should have supt) a friend of his Wives was found, which was the reason of the Suppers breaking off. Pedroes Wife reproving the error of Herculanoes wife, an Asse (by chance) treads on the yong mans fingers that lay hidden under the Hen-coope. Upon his crying out Pedro steppeth thither, sees him, knowes him, and findeth the fallacy of his wife; with whom (neverthesse) he groweth to agreement, in regard of some imperfections in himselfe.

THE TENTH NOVELL

Reprehending the cunning of immodest women, who by abusing themselves, do throw evill aspersions on all their Sexe.

THE Queenes Novell being ended, and all applauding the happy fortune of Frederigo, as also the noble nature of Madam Giana: Dioneus expecting no command, prepared to deliver his discourse in this maner.

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X

I know not whether I should terme it a vice accidentall, and insuing thorow the badnes of complexions on us mortals; or an error in Nature, to rejoyce rather at lewd accidents, then at deeds that deserve commendation, especially when they no way concern our selves. Now, in regard that all the paines I have hitherto taken, and am also to undergo at this present aymeth at no other end, but onely to purge your minds of melancholly, and entertain the time with mirthful matter: pardon me I pray you (faire Ladies) if my Tale trip in some part, and savour a little of immodesty; yet in hearing it, you may observe the same course, as you doe in pleasing and delightfull Gardens, plucke a sweete Rose, and preserve your fingers from pricking. Which very easily you may doe, winking at the imperfections of a foolish man, and smiling at the amorous subtilties of his Wife, compassionating the misfortune of others, where urgent necessity doth require it.

There dwelt not long since in Perugia, a wealthy man named Pedro di Vinciolo, who perhaps more to deceive some other, and restraints an evill opinion which the Perugians had conceived of him, in matter no way beseeeming a man, then any beauty or good feature remaining in the woman entred into the estate of marriage. And Fortune was so conforme to him in his election, that the woman whom he had made his wife, had a yong, lusty, and well enabled bodie, a red-haird Wench, hot and fiery spirited, standing more in neede of three Husbands, then he, who could not any way well content one Wife, because his minde ran more on his mony, then those offices and duties belonging to wedlock, which time acquainted his Wife withall, contrary to her owne expectation, and those delights which the estate of marriage afforded, knowing her selfe also to be of a sprightly disposition, and not to be easily tamed by household cares and attendances, shee waxed weary of her husbands unkind courses, upbraided him daily with harsh speeches, making his owne home meerly as a hell to him.

When she saw that this domesticke disquietnesse re-

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL turned her no benefit, but rather tended to her own consumption, then any amendment in her miserable Husband, shee began thus to conferre with her private thoughts. This Husband of mine liveth with me, as if he were no Husband, or I his Wife; the marriage bed, which should be a comfort to us both, seemeth hatefull to him, and as little pleasing to mee, because his minde is on his money, his head busied with worldly cogitations, and early and late in his counting-house, admitting no familiar conversation with me. Why should not I be as respectlesse of him, as he declares him selfe to be of me? I tooke him for an Husband, brought him a good and sufficient Dowry, thinking him to be a man, and affected a woman as a man ought to doe, else he had never beene any Husband of mine. If he be a Woman hater, why did he make choice of me to be his Wife? If I had not intended to be of the World, I could have coopt my selfe up in a Cloyster, and shorne my selfe a Nunne, but that I was not born to such severity of life. My youth shall be blasted with age before I can truly understand what youth is, and I shall be branded with the disgraceful word barrennesse, knowing my selfe meete and able to be a Mother, were my Husband but worthy the name of a Father, or expected issue and posterity, to leave our memoriall to after times in our race, as all our predecessours formerly have done, and for which mariage was chiefly instituted. Castles long besieged, doe yeeld at the last, and women wronged by their owne husbands, can hardly warrant their owne frailty, especially living among so many temptations, which flesh and bloud are not alwaies able to resist. Well, I meane to be advised in this case, before I will hazard my honest reputation, either to suspicion or scandall, then which, no woman can have two heavier enemies, and very few there are that can escape them.

Having thus a long while consulted with her selfe, and (perhaps) oftner then twice or thrice; she became secretly acquainted with an aged woman, generally reputed to be more then halfe a Saint, walking alwayes very demurely in

THE FIFT DAY

NOVELL

X

the streetes, counting (over and over) her Paters Nosters, and all the Cities holy pardons hanging at her girdle never talking of any thing, but the lives of the holy Fathers, or the woundes of Saint Frances, all the World admiring her sanctity of life, even as if shee were divinely inspired: this shee Saint must bee our distressed womans Counsellour, and having found out a convenient season, at large she imparted all her minde to her, in some such manner as formerly you have heard, whereto she returned this answer.

Now trust me Daughter, thy case is to be pittied, and so much the rather, because thou art in the flowre and spring time of thy youth, when not a minute of time is to bee left: for there is no greater an errour in this life, then the losse of time, because it cannot bee recovered againe; and when the fiends themselves affright us, yet if wee keepe our embers still covered with warme ashes on the hearth, they have not any power to hurt us. If any one can truly speake thereof, then I am able to deliver true testimony; for I know, but not without much perturbation of minde, and piercing afflictions in the spirit; how much time I lost without any profit. And yet I lost not all, for I would not have thee thinke me to bee so foolish, that I did altogether neglect such an especiall benefit; which when I call to mind, and consider now in what condition I am, thou must imagine, it is no small hearts griefe to mee, that age should make me utterly despised, and no fire afforded to light my tinder.

With men it is not so, they are borne apt for a thousand occasions, as well for the present purpose wee talke of, as infinite other beside; yea, and many of them are more esteemed being aged, then when they were young. But women serve onely for mens contentation, and to bring Children; and therefore are they generally beloved, which if they faile of, either it is by unfortunate marriage, or some imperfection depending on nature, not through want of good will in themselves. Wee have nothing in this World but what is given us, in which regard, wee are to

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL

X

make use of our time, and employ it the better while wee have it. For, when wee grow to bee old, our Husbands, yea, our very dearest and nearest Friends, will scarcely looke on us. Wee are then fit for nothing, but to sit by the fire in the Kitchin, telling tales to the Cat, or counting the Pots and Pannes on the shelves. Nay, which is worse Rimes and Songs is made of us, even in meere contempt of our age, and commendation of such as are young, th daintiest morsels are fittest for them, and wee referred to feed on the scrappes from their Trenchers, or such reversion as they can spare us. I tell thee Daughter, thou couldst not make choyce of a meeter woman in all the City, to whom thou mightest safely open thy minde, and knowe better to advise thee then I doe. But remember withall that I am poore, and it is your part not to suffer poverty to bee unsupplied. I will make thee partaker of all these blessed pardons, at every Altar I will say a Pater Noster, and an Ave Maria, that thou maist prosper in thy heart desires, and be defended from foule sinne and shame, and so she ended her Motherly counsell.

Within a while after, it came to passe, that her Husband was invited forth to supper, with one named Herculano, kinde Friend of his, but his Wife refused to goe, because she had appointed a Friend to Supper with her, to whom the old woman was employed as her messenger, and was well recompenced for her labour. This friend was a gallant proper youth, as any all Perugia yeelded, and scarcely was hee seated at the Table, but her Husband was returned backe, and called to bee let in at the doore. Which when shee perceived, she was almost halfe dead with feare, and coveting to hide the young man, that her Husband should not have any sight of him, shee had no other meanes, but in an entry, hard by the Parlour where they purposed to have supt, stood a Coope or Hen-pen, wherein shee used to keepe her Pullen, under which hee crept, and then shee covered it with an olde empty Sacke, and after ranne to let her Husband come in. When hee was entred into the House; as halfe offended at his so sudden returne, angrily

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NOVELL

X

she saide : It seemes Sir you are a shaver at your meate, that you have made so short a Supper. In troth Wife (quoth hee) I have not supt at all, no not so much as eaten one bit. How hapned that, said the woman? Marry Wife (quoth hee) I will tell you, and then thus he began.

As Herculano, his Wife, and I were sitting downe at the Table, very neere unto us wee heard one sneeze, whereof at the first wee made no reckoning, untill wee heard it againe the second time, yea, a third, fourth, and fifth, and many more after, whereat wee were not a little amazed. Now Wife I must tell you, before wee entred the roome where we were to sup, Herculanoes Wife kept the doore fast shut against us, and would not let us enter in an indifferent while; which made him then somewhat offended, but now much more, when hee had heard one to sneeze so often. Demanded of her a reason for it, and who it was that thus sneezed in his House: hee started from the Table, and stepping to a little doore neere the staires head, necessarily made, to set such things in, as otherwise would be troublesome to the roome, (as in all Houses we commonly see the like) he perceived, that the party was hidden there, which wee had heard so often to sneeze before.

No sooner had hee opened the doore, but such a smell of brimstone came foorth (whereof wee felt not the least savour before) as made us likewise to cough and sneeze, being no way able to refraine it. Shee seeing her Husband to bee much moved, excused the matter thus: that (but a little while before) shee had whited certaine linnen with the smoake of brimstone, as it is a usuall thing to doe, and then set the Pan into that spare place, because it should not bee offensive to us. By this time, Herculano had espied him that sneezed, who being almost stifled with the smell, and closenesse of the small roome wherein hee lay, had not any power to helpe himselfe, but still continued coughing and sneezing, even as if his heart would have split in twaine. Foorth hee pluckt him by the heeles, and perceiving how matter had past, hee saide to her. I thanke

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NOVELL

X

you Wife, now I see the reason, why you kept us so long from comming into this roome: let mee die, if I beare this wrong at your hands. When his Wife heard these words, and saw the discovery of her shame; without returning either excuse or answer, foorth of doores shee ranne, but whither, wee know not. Herculano drew his Dagger, and would have slaine him that still lay sneezing: but I disswaded him from it, as well in respect of his, as also mine owne danger, when the Law should censure on the deede. And after the young man was indifferently recovered; by the perswasion of some Neighbours comming in: hee was closely conveyed out of the House, and all the noyse quietly pacified. Onely (by this meanes, and the flight of Herculanoes Wife) wee were disappointed of our Supper, and now you know the reason of my so soone returning.

When shee had heard this whole discourse, then shee perceived, that other Women were subject to the like infirmitie, and as wise for themselves, as shee could be, though these the like sinister accidents might sometime crosse them: and gladly shee wished, that Herculanoes Wives excuse, might now serve to acquite her: but because in blaming others errorrs, our owne may sometime chance to escape discovery, and cleare us, albeit wee are as guilty; in a sharpe reprehending manner, thus shee began. See Husband, heere is hansome behaviour, of an holy faire-seeming, and Saint-like woman, to whom I durst have confest my sinnes, I conceived such a religious perswasion of her lives integrety, free from the least scruple of taxation. A woman, so farre stept into yeeres, as shee is, to give such an evill example to younger women, is it not a sinne beyond all sufferance? Accursed be the houre, when she was borne into this World, and her selfe likewise, to bee so lewdly and incontinently given; an universall shame and slaunder, to all the good women of our City.

Shall I tearme her a woman, or rather some savage monster in a womans shape? Hath shee not made an open prostitution of her honesty, broken her plighted faith to her Husband, and all the womanly reputation shee had in

THE FIFT DAY

NOVELL

X

this World? Her Husband, being an honourable Citizen, entreating her alwayes, as few men else in the City doe their wives; what an heart-breake must this needes bee to him, good man? Neither I, nor any honest man else, ought to have any pity on her, but (with our owne hands) teare her in peeces, or dragge her along to a good fire in the Market place, wherein she and her minion should be consumed together, and their base ashes dispersed abroad in the winde, least the pure Aire should be infected with them.

Then, remembring her owne case, and her poore affrighted friend, who lay in such distresse under the Hen-coope; she began to advise her Husband, that he would be pleased to go to bed, because the night passed on apace. But Pedro, having a better will to eate, then to sleepe, desired her to let him have some meate, else hee must goe to bed with an empty bellie; whereto shee answered. Why Husband (quoth shee) doe I make any large provision, when I am debard of your company? I would I were the Wife of Herculano, seeing you cannot content your selfe from one nights feeding, considering, it is now over-late to make any thing ready.

It fortun'd, that certaine Husbandmen, which had the charge of Pedros Farme-house in the Countrey, and there followed his affaires of Husbandry, were returned home this instant night, having their Asses laden with such provision, as was to bee used in his City-house. When the Asses were unladen, and set up in a small Stable, without watering; one off them being (belike) more thirsty then the rest, brake loose, and wandering all about smelling to seeke water, happened into the entry, where the young man lay hidden under the Hen pen. Now, hee being constrained (like a Carpe) to lye flat on his belly, because the Coope was over-weighty for him to carry, and one of his hands more extended foorth, then was requisite for him in so urgent a shift: it was his hap (or ill fortune rather) that the Asse set his foote on the young mans fingers, treading so hard, and the paine being very irkesome to him, as hee

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL was enforced to cry out aloud: which Pedro hearing, he
X wondered thereat not a little.

Knowing that this cry was in his house, hee tooke the Candle in his hand, and going forth of the Parlour, heard the cry to be louder; because the Asse removed not his foote, but rather trod the more firmly on his hand. Comming to the Coope, driving the Asse, and taking off the old sacke, he espyed the young man, who, beside the painefull anguish he felt of his fingers, arose up trembling, as fearing some outrage beside to bee offered him by Pedro, who knew the youth perfectly, and demaunded of him, how he came thither. No answer did hee make to that question, but humbly entreated (for charities sake) that hee would not doe him any harme. Feare not (quoth Pedro) I will not offer thee any violence: onely tell mee how thou camest hither, and for what occasion; wherein the youth fully resolved him.

Pedro being no lesse joyfull for thus finding him, then his Wife was sorrowfull, tooke him by the hand, and brought him into the Parlour, where shee sate trembling and quaking, as not knowing what to say in this distresse. Seating himselfe directly before her, and holding the youth still fast by the hand, thus hee began. Oh Wife! What bitter speeches did you use (even now) against the Wife of Herculano, maintaining that shee had shamed all other women, and justly deserved to be burned? Why did you not say as much of your selfe? Or, if you had not the heart to speake, how could you bee so cruell against her, knowing your offence as great as hers? Questionlesse, nothing else urged you thereto, but that all women are of one and the same condition, covering their owne grosse faults by farre inferiour infirmities in others. You are a perverse generation, meerely false in your fairest shewes.

When she saw that he offered her no other violence, but gave her such vaunting and reproachfull speeches, holding still the young man before her face, meerely vexe and despight her: shee began to take heart, and thus replied.

THE FIFT DAY

NOVELL

X

Doest thou compare mee with the Wife of Herculano, who is an old, dissembling hypocrite? Yet she can have of him whatsoever shee desireth, and he useth her as a woman ought to be, which favour I could never yet finde at thy hands. Put the case, that thou keepest me in good garments; allowing mee to goe neatly hosed and shod; yet well thou knowest, there are other meere matters belonging to a woman, and every way as necessarily required, both for the preservation of Houshold quietnesse, and those other rites betweene a Husband and Wife. Let mee be worsè garmented, courser dieted, yea, debarred of all pleasure and delights; so I might once be worthy the name of a Mother, and leave some remembrance of woman-hood behinde me. I tell thee plainly Pedro, I am a woman as others are, and subject to the same desires, as (by nature) attendeth on flesh and blood: looke how thou failest in kindnesse towards me, thinke it not amisse, if I doe the like to thee, and endeavour thou to win the worthy title of a Father, because I was made to be a Mother.

When Pedro perceived, that his Wife had spoken nothing but reason, in regard of his over-much neglect towards her, and not using such Houshold kindnesse, as ought to be betweene Man and Wife, hee returned her this answer. Well Wife (quoth he) I confesse my fault, and hereafter will labour to amend it; conditionally, that this youth, nor any other, may no more visite my House in my absence. Get me therefore something to eate, for doubtlesse, this young man and thy selfe fell short of your Supper, by reason of my so soone returning home. In troth Husband, saide she, we did not eate one bit of any thing, and I will be a true and loyall Wife to thee, so thou wilt be the like to me. No more words then Wife, replied Pedro, all is forgotten and forgiven, let us to Supper, and we are all friends. She seeing his anger was so well appeased, lovingly kissed him, and laying the cloth, set on the supper, which she had provided for her selfe and the youth, and so they supt together merrily, not one unkinde word passing betweene them. After Supper, the youth was sent away in

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL X friendly manner, and Pedro was alwayes afterward more loving to his Wife, then formerly hee had beene, and no complaint passed on either side, but mutuall joy and Houshold contentment, such as ought to bee betweene Man and Wife.

Dioneus having ended this his Tale, for which the Ladies returned him no thankses, but rather angrily frowned on him : the Queene, knowing that her government was now concluded, arose, and taking off her Crowne of Lawrell, placed it graciously on the head of Madame Eliza, saying. Now Madame, it is your turne to commaund. Eliza having received the honour, did (in all respects) as others formerly had done, and after shee had enstructed the Master of the Houshold, concerning his charge during the time of her Régiment, for contentation of all the company ; thus shee spake.

We have long since heard, that with witty words, ready answeres and sudden jests or taunts, many have checkt and reprov'd great folly in others, and to their no meane owne commendation. Now, because it is a pleasing kinde of argument, ministring occasion of mirth and wit : my desire is, that all our discourse to morrow shall tend thereto. I meane of such persons, either Men or Women, who with some sudden witty answer, have encountred a scorner in his owne intention, and layed the blame where it justly belonged. Every one commended the Queenes appointment, because it savoured of good wit and judgement ; and the Queene being risen, they were all discharged till supper time, falling to such severall exercises as themselves best fancied.

When Supper was ended, and the instruments layed before them ; by the Queenes consent, Madam Æmilia undertooke the daunce, and the Song was appointed to Dioneus, who began many, but none that proved to any liking, they were so palpably obscene and idle, savouring altogether of his owne wanton disposition. At the length, the Queene looking stearnely on him, and commanding him to sing a good one, or none at all ; thus he began.

THE FIFT DAY

THE SONG

NOVELL
X

Eyes, can ye not refraine your hourelly weeping?
Eares, how are you depriv'd of sweete attention?
Thoughts, have you lost your quiet silent sleeping?
Wit, who hath rob'd thee of thy rare invention?
The lacke of these, being life and motion giving :
Are senselesse shapes, and no true signes of living.

Eyes, when you gaz'd upon her Angell beauty ;
Eares, while you heard her sweete delitious straines,
Thoughts (sleeping then) did yet performe their duty,
Wit, tooke sprightly pleasure in his paines.
While shee did live, then none of these were scanting,
But now (being dead) they all are gone, and wanting.

After that Dioneus (by proceeding no further) declared
the finishing of his Song ; many more were sung beside, and
that of Dioneus highly commended. Some part of the
night being spent in other delightfull exercises, and a
fitting houre for rest drawing on : they betooke
themselves to their Chambers, where we will
leave them till to morrow morning.

THE END OF THE FIFT DAY

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THE DECAMERON
CONTAINING AN HUNDRED
PLEASANT NOVELS
WITTILY DISCOURSED, BETWEEENE
SEVEN HONOURABLE LADIES, AND
THREE NOBLE GENTLEMEN
THE LAST FIVE DAYES

1620

•

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,
SIR PHILLIP HERBERT,

Knight, Lord Baron of Sherland, Earle of
Montgomery, and Knight of the most
Noble order of the Garter.



HAVING (by your Honorable command) translated this *Decameron*, or *Cento Novelle*, sirnamed *Il Principe Galeotto*, of ten dayes severall discourses, grounded on variable and singuler Arguments, happening betweene seaven Noble Ladies, and three very Honourable Gentlemen: Although not attyred in such elegantcy of phrase, or nice curiosity of stile, as a quicker and more sprightly wit could have performed, but in such homeborne language, as my ability could stretch unto; yet it commeth (in all duty) to kisse your Noble hand, and to shelter it selfe under your Gracious protection, though not from the leering eye, and over-lavish tongue of snarling Envy; yet from the power of his blasting poyson, and malice of his machinations.

THE DECAMERON

TO THE READER



BOOKES (Courteous Reader) may rightly be compared to Gardens; wherein, let the painfull Gardiner expresse never so much care and diligent endeavour; yet among the very fairest, sweetest, and freshest Flowers, as also Plants of most precious Vertue; ill savouring and stinking Weeds, fit for no use but the fire or mucke-hill, will spring and sprout up. So fareth it with Bookes of the very best quality, let the Author bee never so indulgent, and the Printer vigilant: yet both may misse their ayme, by the escape of Errors and Mistakes, either in sense or matter, the one fault ensuing by a ragged Written Copy; and the other thorough want of wary Correction. If then the best Bookes cannot be free from this common infirmity; blame not this then, of farre lighter argument, wherein thy courtesie may helpe us both: His blame, in acknowledging his more sufficiency, then to write so grosse and absurdly: And mine, in pardoning unwilling Errours committed, which thy judgement finding, thy pen can as easily correct.

FAREWELL.

THE SIXT DAY

THE SIXT DAY

Governed under the Authority of Madam Eliza, and the Argument of the Discourses or Novels there to be recounted, doe concerne such persons ; who by some witty words (when any have checkt or taunted them) have revenged themselves, in a sudden, unexpected and discreet answeare, thereby preventing losse, danger, scorne and disgrace, re-torting them on the busi-headed Questioners.

THE INDUCTION



THE Moone having past the heaven, lost her bright splendor, by the arising of a more powerfull light, and every part of our world began to looke cleare : when the Queene (being risen) caused all the Company to be called, walking forth afterward upon the pearly dewe (so farre as was supposed convenient) in faire and familiar conference together, according as severally they were disposed, and repetition of divers the passed Novels, especially those which were most pleasing, and seemed so by their present commendations. But the Sunne beeing somewhat higher mounted, gave such a sensible warmth to the ayre, as caused their returne backe to the Pallace, where the Tables were readily covered against their comming, strewed with

THE DECAMERON

THE IN-
DUCTION

sweete hearbes and odoriferous flowers, seating themselves at the Tables (before the heat grew more violent) according as the Queene commanded.

After dinner, they sung divers excellent Canzonnets, and then some went to sleepe, others played at the Chesse, and some at the Tables: But Dioneus and Madam Lauretta, they sung the love-conflict betweene Troylus and Cressida. Now was the houre come, of repairing to their former Consistory or meeting place, the Queene having thereto generally summoned them, and seating themselves (as they were wont to doe) about the faire fountaine. As the Queene was commanding to begin the first Novell, an accident suddenly happened, which never had befalne before: to wit, they heard a great noyse and tumult, among the houshold servants in the Kitchin. Whereupon, the Queene caused the Master of the Houshold to be called, demaunding of him, what noyse it was, and what might be the occasion thereof? He made answer, that Lacisca and Tindaro were at some words of discontentment, but what was the occasion thereof, he knew not. Whereupon, the Queene commanded that they should be sent for, (their anger and violent speeches still continuing) and being come into her presence, she demaunded the reason of their discord; and Tindaro offering to make answer, Lacisca (being somewhat more ancient then he, and of a fiercer fiery spirit, even as if her heart would have leapt out of her mouth) turned her selfe to him, and with a scornefull frowning countenance, said. See how this bold, unmannerly and beastly fellow, dare presume to speake in this place before me: Stand by (saucy impudence) and give your better leave to answer; then turning to the Queene, thus shee proceeded.

Madam, this idle fellow would maintaine to me, that Signior Sicophanto marrying with Madama della Grazza, had the victory of her virginity the very first night; and I avouched the contrary, because shee had been a mother twice before, in very faire adventuring of her fortune. And he dared to affirme beside, that yong Maides are so simple, as to loose the flourishing Aprill of their time, in meere feare

THE SIXT DAY

THE IN-
DUCTION

of their parents, and great prejudice of their amourous friends. Onely being abused by infinite promises, that this yeare and that yeare they shall have husbands, when, both by the lawes of nature and reason, they are not tyed to tarry so long, but rather ought to lay hold upon opportunity, when it is fairely and friendly offered, so that seldome they come maides to marriage. Beside, I have heard, and know some married wives, that have played divers wanton prancks with their husbands, yet carried all so demurely and smoothly; that they have gone free from publique detection. All which this woodcocke will not credit, thinking me to be so yong a Novice, as if I had been borne but yesterday.

While Lacisca was delivering these speeches, the Ladies smiled on one another, not knowing what to say in this case: And although the Queene (five or sixe severall times) commaunded her to silence; yet such was the earnestnes of her spleen, that she gave no attention, but held on still, even untill she had uttered all that she pleased. But after she had concluded her complaint, the Queene (with a smiling countenance) turned towards Dioneus, saying. This matter seemeth most properly to belong to you; and therefore I dare repose such trust in you, that when our Novels (for this day) shall be ended, you will conclude the case with a definitive sentence. Whereto Dioneus presently thus replied. Madam, the verdict is already given, without any further expectation: and I affirme, that Lacisca hath spoken very sensibly, because shee is a woman of good apprehension, and Tindaro is but a puny, in practise and experience, to her.

When Lacisca heard this, she fell into a lowd Laughter, and turning her selfe to Tindaro, sayde: The honour of the day is mine, and thine owne quarrell hath overthrowne thee in the field. Thou that (as yet) hath scarcely learned to sucke, wouldest thou presume to know so much as I doe? Couldst thou imagine mee, to be such a trewant in losse of my time, that I came hither as an ignorant creature? And had not the Queene (looking verie frowningly on her) strictly enjoyned her to silence; shee would have continued

THE DECAMERON

THE IN- still in this triumphing humour. But fearing further chas-
DUCTION tisement for disobedience, both shee and Tindaro were com-
manded thence, where was no other allowance all this day,
but onely silence and attention, to such as should be enjoyned
speakers.

And then the Queene, somewhat offended at the folly of
the former controversie, commanded Madame Philomena,
that she should give beginning to the dayes Novels:
which (in dutifull manner) shee undertooke to doe, and
seating her selfe in formall fashion, with modest and very
gracious gesture, thus she began.

A Knight requested Madam Oretta, to ride be-
hinde him on horse-backe, and promised, to tell
her an excellent Tale by the way. But the Lady
perceiving, that his discourse was idle, and much
worse delivered: entreated him to let her walke
on foote againe.

THE FIRST NOVELL

Reprehending the folly of such men, as undertake
to report discourses, which are beyond their wit
and capacity, and gaine nothing but blame for
their labour.

GRACIOUS Ladies, like as in our faire, cleere, and
serene seasons, the Starres are bright ornaments to
the heavens, and the flowry fields (so long as the
spring time lasteth) weare their goodliest Liveries, the Trees
likewise bragging in their best adornings: Even so at
friendly meetings, short, sweet, and sententious words, are
the beauty and ornament of any discourse, savouring of wit
and sound judgement, worthily deserving to be commended.

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL

I

And so much the rather, because in few and witty words, aptly suting with the time and occasion, more is delivered then was expected, or sooner answered, then rashly apprehended: which, as they become men verie highly, yet do they shew more singular in women.

True it is, what the occasion may be, I know not, either by the badnesse of our wittes, or the especial enmitie betweene our complexions and the celestiaall bodies: there are scarcely any, or very few Women to be found among us, that well knowes how to deliver a word, when it should and ought to be spoken; or, if a question bee mooved, understands to suite it with an apt answer, such as conveniently is required, which is no meane disgrace to us women. But in regard, that Madame Pampinea hath already spoken sufficiently of this matter, I meane not to presse it any further: but at this time it shall satisfie mee, to let you know, how wittily a Ladie made due observation of opportunitie, in answering of a Knight, whose talke seemed tedious and offensive to her.

No doubt there are some among you, who either do know, or (at the least) have heard, that it is no long time since, when there dwelt a Gentlewoman in our Citie, of excellent grace and good discourse, with all other rich endowments of Nature remaining in her, as pittie it were to conceale her name: and therefore let me tell ye, that shee was called Madame Oretta, the Wife to Signior Geri Spina. She being upon some occasion (as now we are) in the Countrey, and passing from place to place (by way of neighbourly invitations) to visite her loving Friends and Acquaintance, accompanied with divers Knights and Gentlewomen, who on the day before had dined and supt at her house, as now (belike) the selfe-same courtesie was intended to her: walking along with her company upon the way; and the place for her welcome beeing further off then she expected; a Knight chanced to overtake this faire troop, who well knowing Madam Oretta, using a kinde and courteous salutation, spake thus unto her.

Madam, this foot travell may bee offensive to you, and

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NOVELL

I

were you so well pleased as my selfe, I would ease your journey behinde mee on my Gelding, even so farre as you shall command me: and beside, wil shorten your wearinesse with a Tale worth the hearing. Courteous Sir (replyed the Lady) I embrace your kinde offer with such acceptation, that I pray you to performe it; for therein you shall doe me an especiall favour. The Knight, whose Sword (perhappes) was as unsuteable to his side, as his wit out of fashion for any readie discourse, having the Lady mounted behinde him: rode on with a gentle pace, and (according to his promise) began to tell a Tale, which indeede (of it selfe) deserved attention, because it was a knowne and commendable History, but yet delivered so abruptly, with idle repetitions of some particulars three or foure severall times, mistaking one thing for another, and wandering erroneously from the essentiall subject, seeming neere an end, and then beginning againe: that a poore Tale could not possibly be more mangled, or worse tortured in telling, then this was; for the persons therein concerned, were so abusively nicke-named, their actions and speeches so monstrously mishapen, that nothing could appeare to be more ugly.

Madame Oretta, being a Lady of unequalled ingenuitie, admirable in judgement, and most delicate in her speech, was afflicted in soule, beyond all measure; overcome with many colde sweates, and passionate heart-aking qualmes, to see a Foole thus in a Pinne-fold, and unable to get out, albeit the doore stood wide open to him, whereby shee became so sicke; that, converting her distaste to a kinde of pleasing acceptation, merrily thus she spake. Beleeve me Sir, your horse trots so hard, and travels so uneasily; that I entreate you to let me walke on foot againe.

The Knight, being (perchance) a better understander, then a Discourser; perceived by this witty taunt, that his Bowle had run a contrarie bias, and he as farre out of Tune, as he was from the Towne. So, lingering the time, untill her company was neerer arrived: hee left her with them, and rode on as his Wisedome could best direct him.

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
II

Cistio a Baker, by a wittie answer which he gave unto Messer Geri Spina, caused him to acknowledge a very indiscreete motion, which he had made to the said Cistio.

THE SECOND NOVELL

Approving, that a request ought to be civill, before it should be granted to any one whatsoever.

THE words of Madame Oretta, were much commended by the men and women; and the discourse being ended, the Queene gave command to Madam Pampinea, that shee should follow next in order, which made her to begin in this manner.

Worthy Ladies, it exceedeth the power of my capacitie, to censure in the case whereof I am to speake, by saying, who sinned most, either Nature, in seating a Noble soule in a vile body, or Fortune, in bestowing on a body (beautified with a noble soule) a base or wretched condition of life. As we may observe by Cistio, a Citizen of our owne, and many more beside; for, this Cistio beeing endued with a singular good spirit, Fortune hath made him no better then a Baker. And beleeve me Ladies, I could (in this case) lay as much blame on Nature, as on Fortune; if I did not know Nature to be most absolutely wise, and that Fortune hath a thousand eyes, albeit fooles have figured her to bee blinde. But, upon more mature and deliberate consideration, I finde, that they both (being truly wise and judicious) have dealt justly, in imitation of our best advised mortals, who being uncertaine of such inconveniences, as may happen unto them, do bury (for their own benefit) the very best and choicest things of esteeme, in the most vile and abject places of their houses, as being subject to least suspition, and where they may be

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II

sure to have them at all times, for supply of any necessitie whatsoever, because so base a conveyance hath better kept them, then the very best chamber in the house could have done. Even so these two great commanders of the world, do many times hide their most precious Jewels of worth, under the clouds of Arts or professions of worst estimation, to the end, that fetching them thence when neede requires, their splendor may appeare to be the more glorious. Nor was any such matter noted in our homely Baker Cistio, by the best observation of Messer Geri Spina, who was spoken of in the late repeated Novell, as being the husband to Madame Oretta; whereby this accident came to my remembrance, and which (in a short Tale) I will relate unto you.

Let me then tell ye, that Pope Boniface (with whom the fore-named Messer Geri Spina was in great regard) having sent divers Gentlemen of his Court to Florence as Ambassadors, about very serious and important businesse: they were lodged in the house of Messer Geri Spina, and he employed (with them) in the saide Popes negotiation. It chanced, that as being the most convenient way for passage, every morning they walked on foot by the Church of Saint Marie d'Ughi, where Cistio the Baker dwelt, and exercised the trade belonging to him. Now although Fortune had humbled him to so meane a condition, yet shee added a blessing of wealth to that contemptible quality, and (as smiling on him continually) no disasters at any time befell him, but still he flourished in riches, lived like a jolly Citizen, with all things fitting for honest entertainment about him, and plenty of the best Wines (both White and Claret) as Florence, or any part thereabout yeelded.

Our frolicke Baker perceiving, that Messer Geri Spina and the other Ambassadors, used every morning to passe by his doore, and afterward to returne backe the same way: seeing the season to be somewhat hot and soultry, he tooke it as an action of kindnesse and courtesie, to make them an offer of tasting his white wine. But having respect to his owne meane degree, and the condition of Messer Geri: hee thought it farre unfitting for him, to be so forward in such

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II

presumption; but rather entred into consideration of some such meanes, whereby Messer Geri might bee the inviter of himselfe to taste his Wine. And having put on him a trusse or thin doublet, of very white and fine Linnen cloath, as also breeches, and an apron of the same, and a white cap upon his head, so that he seemed rather to be a Miller, then a Baker: at such times as Messer Geri and the Ambassadors should daily passe by, hee set before his doore a new Bucket of faire water, and another small vessell of Bologna earth (as new and sightly as the other) full of his best and choisest white Wine, with two small Glasses, looking like silver, they were so cleare. Downe he sate, with all this provision before him, and emptying his stomacke twice or thrice, of some clotted flegmes which seemed to offend it: even as the Gentlemen were passing by, he dranke one or two rouses of his Wine so heartily, and with such a pleasing appetite, as might have moved a longing (almost) in a dead man.

Messer Geri well noting his behaviour, and observing the verie same course in him two mornings together; on the third day (as he was drinking) he said unto him. Well done Cistio, what, is it good, or no? Cistio starting up, forthwith replied: Yes Sir, the wine is good indeed, but how can I make you to beleve me, except you taste of it? Messer Geri, eyther in regard of the times quality, or by reason of his paines taken, perhaps more then ordinary, or else, because hee saw Cistio had drunke so sprightly, was very desirous to taste of the Wine, and turning unto the Ambassadors, in merriment he saide. My Lords, me thinks it were not much amisse, if we tooke a taste of this honest mans Wine, perhaps it is so good, that we shall not neede to repent our labour.

Heereupon, he went with them to Cistio, who had caused an handsome seate to be fetched forth of his house, whereon he requested them to sit downe, and having commanded his men to wash cleane the Glasses, he saide. Fellowes, now get you gone, and leave me to the performance of this service; for I am no worse a skinker, then a Baker, and

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NOVELL II tarry you never so long, you shall not drinke a drop. Having thus spoken, himselfe washed foure or five small glasses, faire and new, and causing a Viall of his best wine to be brought him: hee diligently filled it out to Messer Geri and the Ambassadors, to whom it seemed the very best Wine, that they had drunke of in a long while before. And having given Cistio most hearty thanks for his kinnesse, and the Wine his due commendation: many dayes afterwarde (so long as they continued there) they found the like courteous entertainment, and with the good liking of honest Cistio.

But when the affayres were fully concluded, for which they wer thus sent to Florence, and their parting preparation in due readinesse: Messer Geri made a very sumptuous Feast for them, inviting thereto the most part of the honourablest Citizens, and Cistio to be one amongst them; who (by no meanes) would bee seene in an assembly of such State and pompe, albeit he was thereto (by the saide Messer Geri) most earnestly entreated.

In regard of which deniall, Messer Geri commaunded one of his servants, to take a small Bottle, and request Cistio to fill it with his good Wine; then afterward, to serve it in such sparing manner to the Table, that each Gentleman might be allowed halfe a glasse-full at their down-sitting. The Serving-man, who had heard great report of the Wine, and was halfe offended, because he could never taste thereof: tooke a great Flaggon Bottle, containing foure or five Gallons at the least, and comming there-with unto Cistio, saide unto him. Cistio, because my Master cannot have your companie among his friends, he prayes you to fill this Bottle with your best Wine. Cistio looking uppon the huge Flaggon, replied thus. Honest Fellow, Messer Geri never sent thee with such a Message to me: which although the Serving-man very stoutly maintained, yet getting no other answer, he returned backe therewith to his Master.

Messer Geri returned the Servant backe againe unto Cistio, saying: Goe, and assure Cistio, that I sent thee

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NOVELL

II

to him, and if hee make thee any more such answers, then demaund of him, to what place else I should send thee? Being come againe to Cistio, hee avouched that his Maister had sent him, but Cistio affirming, that hee did not: the Servant asked, to what place else hee should send him? Marrie (quoth Cistio) unto the River of Arno, which runneth by Florence, there thou mayest be sure to fill thy Flaggon. When the Servant had reported this answer to Messer Geri, the eyes of his understanding beganne to open, and calling to see what Bottle hee had carried with him: no sooner looked he on the huge Flaggon, but severely reprovng the sawcinesse of his Servant, hee sayde. Now trust mee, Cistio told thee nothing but trueth, for neither did I send thee with any such dishonest message, nor had the reason to yeeld or grant it.

Then he sent him with a bottle of more reasonable competencie, which so soone as Cistio saw: Yea mary my friend, quoth he, now I am sure that thy Master sent thee to me, and he shall have his desire with all my hart. So, commaunding the Bottle to be filled, he sent it away by the Servant, and presently following after him, when he came unto Messer Geri, he spake unto him after this maner. Sir, I would not have you to imagine, that the huge flaggon (which first came) did any jotte dismay mee; but rather I conceyved, that the small Viall whereof you tasted every morning, yet filled many mannerly Glasses together, was fallen quite out of your remembrance; in plainer tearmes, it beeing no Wine for Groomes or Peazants, as your selfe affirmed yesterday. And because I meane to bee a Skinker no longer, by keeping Wine to please any other pallate but mine owne: I have sent you halfe my store, and heereafter thinke of mee as you shall please. Messer Geri tooke both his guifte and speeches in most thankefull manner, accepting him alwayes after, as his intimate Friend, because he had so graced him before the Ambassadors.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL

III

Madame Nonna de Pulci, by a sodaine answere, did put to silence a Byshop of Florence, and the Lord Marshall: having moved a question to the said Lady, which seemed to come short of honesty.

THE THIRD NOVELL

Wherein is declared, that mockers do sometimes meete with their matches in mockery, and to their owne shame.

WHEN Madame Pampinea had ended her Discourse, and (by the whole company) the answere and bounty of Cistio, had past with deserved commendation: it pleased the Queene, that Madame Lauretta should next succeed: whereupon verie chearefully thus she beganne.

Faire assembly, Madame Pampinea (not long time since) gave beginning, and Madam Philomena hath also seconded the same argument, concerning the slender vertue remaining in our sexe, and likewise the beautie of wittie words, delivered on apt occasion, and in convenient meetings. Now, because it is needlesse to proceede any further, then what hath beene already spoken: let mee onely tell you (over and beside) and commit it to memorie, that the nature of meetings and speeches are such, as they ought to nippe or touch the hearer, like unto the Sheepes nibling on the tender grasse, and not as the sullen Dogge byteth. For, if their biting be answereable to the Dogges, they deserve not to be termed witty jests or quips, but foule and offensive language: as plainly appeareth by the words of Madame Oretta, and the mery, yet sensible answer of Cistio.

True it is, that if it be spoken by way of answer, and the

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III

answerer biteth doggedly, because himselfe was bitten in the same manner before: he is the lesse to bee blamed, because hee maketh payment but with coine of the same stampe. In which respect, an especial care is to bee had, how, when, with whom, and where we jest or gibe, whereof very many proove too unmindfull, as appeared (not long since) by a Prelate of ours, who met with a byting, no lesse sharpe and bitter, then had first come from himselfe before, as verie briefly I intend to tell you how.

Messer Antonio d'Orso, being Byshoppe of Florence, a vertuous, wise, and reverend Prelate; it fortun'd that a Gentleman of Catalogna, named Messer Diego de la Ratta, and Lord Marshall to King Robert of Naples, came thither to visite him. Hee being a man of very comely personage, and a great observer of the choys'est beauties in Court: among all the other Florentine Dames, one proved to bee most pleasing in his eye, who was a verie faire Woman indeede, and Neece to the Brother of the saide Messer Antonio.

The Husband of this Gentlewoman (albeit descended of a worthie Family) was, neverthelesse, immeasurably covetous, and a verie vile harsh natured man. Which the Lord Marshall understanding, made such a madde composition with him, as to give him five hundred Ducates of Gold, on condition, that hee would let him lye one night with his wife, not thinking him so base minded as to give consent. Which in a greedy avaritious humour he did, and the bargaine being absolutely agreed on; the Lord Marshall prepared to fit him with a payment, such as it should be. He caused so many peeces of silver to be cunningly guilded, as then went for currant mony in Florence, and called Popolines, and after he had lyen with the Lady (contrary to her will and knowledge, her husband had so closely carried the businesse) the money was duely paid to the cornuted Coxcombe. Afterwards, this impudent shame chanced to be generally knowne, nothing remaining to the wilful Wittoll, but losse of his expected gaine, and scorne in every place where he went.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL The Bishop likewise (being a discreete and sober man)
III would seeme to take no knowledge thereof; but bare out
all scoffes with a well settled countenance.

Within a short while after, the Bishop and the Lord Marshal (alwaies conversing together) it came to passe, that upon Saint Johns day, they riding thorow the City, side by side, and viewing the brave beauties, which of them might best deserve to win the prize: the Byshop espied a yong married Lady (which our late greevous pestilence bereaved us of) she being named Madame Nonna de Pulci, and Cousine to Messer Alexio Rinucci, a Gentleman well knowne unto us all. A very goodly beautifull yong woman she was, of delicate language, and singular spirite, dwelling close by S. Peters gate. This Lady did the Bishop shew to the Marshall, and when they were come to her, laying his hand uppon her shoulder, he said. Madam Nonna, What thinke you of this Gallant? Dare you adventure another wager with him?

Such was the apprehension of this witty Lady, that these words seemed to taxe her honour, or else to contaminate the hearers understanding, whereof there were great plenty about her, whose judgement might be as vile, as the speeches were scandalous. Wherefore, never seeking for any further purgation of her cleare conscience, but onely to retort taunt for taunt, presently thus she replied. My Lord, if I should make such a vile adventure, I would looke to bee payde with better money.

These words being heard both by the Bishop and Marshall, they felt themselves touched to the quicke, the one, as the Factor or Broker, for so dishonest a businesse, to the Brother of the Bishop; and the other, as receiving (in his owne person) the shame belonging to his Brother. So, not so much as looking each on other, or speaking one word together all the rest of that day, they rode away with blushing cheekes. Whereby we may collect, that the yong Lady, being so injuriously provoked, did no more then well became her, to bite their basenesse neerely, that so abused her openly.

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
IV

Chichibio, the Cooke to Messer Currado Gianfiliuzzi, by a sodaine pleasant answer which he made to his Master; converted his anger into laughter, and thereby escaped the punishment, that Messer meant to impose on him.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

Whereby plainly appeareth, that a sodaine witty and merry answer, doth oftentimes appease the furious choller of an angry man.

MADAM LAURETTA sitting silent, and the answer of Lady Nonna having past with generall applause: the Queene commanded Madame Neiphila to follow next in order; who instantly thus began. Although a ready wit (faire Ladies) doth many times affoord worthy and commendable speeches, according to the accidents happening to the speaker: yet notwithstanding, Fortune (being a ready helper divers wayes to the timorous) doth often tippe the tongue with such a present reply, as the partie to speake, had not so much leysure as to thinke on, nor yet to invent; as I purpose to let you perceive, by a pretty short Novell.

Messer Currado Gianfiliuzzi (as most of you have both seene and knowen) living alwayes in our Citie, in the estate of a Noble Citizen, beeing a man bountifull, magnificent, and within the degree of Knighthoode: continually kept both Hawkes and Hounds, taking no meane delight in such pleasures as they yeilded, neglecting (for them) farre more serious imployments, wherewith our present subject presumeth not to meddle. Upon a day, having kilde with his Faulcon a Crane, neere to a Village called Peretola, and finding her to be both young and fat, he sent it to his Cooke, a Venetian borne, and named Chichibio, with

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NOVELL

IV

command to have it prepared for his supper. Chichibio, who resembled no other, then (as he was indeede) a plaine, simple, honest mery fellow, having drest the Crane as it ought to bee, put it on the spit, and laide it to the fire.

When it was well neere fully roasted, and gave forth a very delicate pleasing savour; it fortunèd that a young Woman dwelling not far off, named Brunetta, and of whom Chichibio was somewhat enamored, entred into the Kitchin, and feeling the excellent smell of the Crane, to please her beyond all savours, that ever she had felt before: she entreated Chichibio verie earnestly, that hee would bestow a legge thereof on her. Whereto Chichibio (like a pleasant companion, and evermore delighting in singing) sung her this answer.

My Brunetta, faire and feat a,
Why should you say so?
The meate of my Master,
Allowes you for no Taster,
Go from the Kitchin go.

Many other speeches past betweene them in a short while, but in the end, Chichibio, because hee would not have his Mistresse Brunetta angrie with him; cut away one of the Cranes legges from the spit, and gave it to her to eate. Afterward, when the Fowle was served up to the Table before Messer Currado, who had invited certain strangers his friends to sup with him, wondering not a little, he called for Chichibio his Cook; demanding what was become of the Cranes other legge? Whereto the Venetian (being a lyar by Nature) sodainly answered: Sir, Cranes have no more but one legge each Bird. Messer Currado, growing verie angry, replied. Wilt thou tell me, that a Crane hath no more but one legge? Did I never see a Crane before this? Chichibio persisting resolutely in his deniall, saide. Beleeve me Sir, I have told you nothing but the truth, and when you please, I wil make good my wordes, by such Fowles as are living.

Messer Currado, in kinde love to the strangers that hee

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NOVELL
IV

had invited to supper, gave over any further contestation ; onely he said. Seeing thou assurest me, to let me see thy affirmation for truth, by other of the same Fowles living (a thing which as yet I never saw, or heard of) I am content to make prooffe thereof to morrow morning, till then I shall rest satisfied : but, upon my word, if I finde it otherwise, expect such a sound payment, as thy knavery justly deserveth, to make thee remember it all thy life time. The contention ceassing for the night season, Messer Currado, who though he had slept well, remained still discontented in his minde : arose in the morning by breake of day, and puffing and blowing angerly, called for his horses, commanding Chichibio to mount on one of them ; so riding on towards the River, where (earely every morning) he had seene plenty of Cranes, he sayde to his man ; We shall see anon Sirra, whether thou or I lyed yesternight.

Chichibio perceiving, that his Masters anger was not (as yet) asswaged, and now it stood him upon, to make good his lye ; not knowing how he should do it, rode after his Master, fearfully trembling all the way. Gladly he would have made an escape, but hee could not by any possible meanes, and on every side he looked about him, now before, and after behinde, to espy any Cranes standing on both their legges, which would have bin an ominous sight to him. But being come neere to the River, he chanced to see (before any of the rest) upon the banke thereof, about a dozen Cranes in number, each of them standing but upon one legge, as they use to do when they are sleeping. Whereupon, shewing them quickly to Messer Currado, he said. Now Sir your selfe may see, whether I told you true yesternight, or no : I am sure a Crane hath but one thigh, and one leg, as all here present are apparant witnesses, and I have bin as good as my promise.

Messer Currado looking on the Cranes, and well understanding the knavery of his man, replied : Stay but a little while sirra, and I will shew thee, that a Crane hath two thighes, and two legges. Then riding somewhat neerer to them, he cryed out aloud, Shough, shough, which caused

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NOVELL

IV

them to set downe their other legs, and all fled away, after they had made a few paces against the winde for their mounting. So going unto Chichibio, he said: How now you lying Knave, hath a Crane two legs, or no? Chichibio being well-neere at his wits end, not knowing now what answer hee should make; but even as it came sodainly into his minde, said: Sir, I perceive you are in the right, and if you would have done as much yesternight, and had cryed Shough, as here you did: questionlesse, the Crane would then have set down the other legge, as these heere did: but if (as they) she had fled away too, by that meanes you might have lost your Supper.

This sodaine and unexpected witty answer, comming from such a logger-headed Lout, and so seasonably for his owne safety: was so pleasing to Messer Currado, that he fell into a hearty laughter, and forgetting all anger, saide. Chichibio, thou hast quit thy selfe well, and to my contentment: albeit I advise thee, to teach mee no more such trickes heereafter. Thus Chichibio, by his sodaine and merry answer, escaped a sound beating, which (otherwise) his master had inflicted on him.

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL

V

Messer Forese da Rabatte, and Maister Giotto, a Painter by his profession, comming together from Mugello, scornfully reprehended one another for their deformity of body.

THE FIFT NOVELL

Whereby may bee observed, that such as will speake contemptibly of others, ought (first of all) to looke respectively on their owne imperfections.

SO soone as Madame Neiphila sate silent (the Ladies having greatly commended the pleasant answer of Chichibio) Pamphilus, by command from the Queene, spake in this manner. Woorthy Ladies, it commeth to passe oftentimes, that like as Fortune is observed divers wayes, to hide under vile and contemptible Arts, the most great and unvailable treasures of vertue (as, not long since, was well discoursed unto us by Madame Pampinea :) so in like manner hath appeared ; that Nature hath infused very singular spirits into most mishapen and deformed bodies of men. As hath beene noted in two of our owne Citizens, of whom I purpose to speake in fewe words. The one of them was named Messer Forese de Rabatta, a man of little and low person, but yet deformed in body, with a flat face, like a Terrier or Beagle, as if no comparison (almost) could bee made more ugly. But notwithstanding all this deformity, he was so singularly experienced in the Lawes, that all men held him beyond any equall, or rather reputed him as a Treasury of civill knowledge.

The other man, being named Giotto, had a spirit of so great excellency, as there was not any particular thing in Nature, the Mother and Worke-mistresse of all, by continuall motion of the heavens ; but hee by his pen and pensell could perfectly portrait ; shaping them all so truly

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NOVELL V alike and resemblable, that they were taken for the reall matters indeede; and, whether they were present or no, there was hardly any possibility of their distinguishing. So that many times it happened, that by the variable devises he made, the visible sence of men became deceived, in crediting those things to be naturall, which were but meerly painted. By which meanes, hee reduced that singular Art to light, which long time before had lyen buried, under the grosse error of some; who, in the mysterie of painting, delighted more to content the ignorant, then to please the judicious understanding of the wise, he justly deserving thereby, to be tearmed one of the Florentines most glorious lights. And so much the rather, because he performed all his actions, in the true and lowly spirit of humility: for while he lived, and was a Master in his Art, above all other Painters: yet he refused any such title, which shined the more majestically in him, as appeared by such, who knew much lesse then he, or his Schollers either: yet his knowledge was extreemly coveted among them.

Now, notwithstanding all this admirable excellency in him: he was not (thereby) a jot the handsommer man (either in person or countenance) then was our fore-named Lawyer Messer Forese, and therefore my Novell concerneth them both. Understand then (faire Assemblie) that the possessions and inheritances of Messer Forese and Giotto, lay in Mugello; wherefore, when Holy-dayes were celebrated by Order of Court, and in the Sommer time, upon the admittance of so apt a vacation; Forese rode thither upon a very unsightly Jade, such as a man can sildome meet with worse. The like did Giotto the Painter, as ill fitted every way as the other; and having dispatched their busines there, they both returned backe towards Florence, neither of them being able to boast, which was the best mounted.

Riding on a faire and softly pace, because their Horses could goe no faster: and they being well entred into yeeres, it fortun'd (as oftentimes the like befalleth in Sommer) that

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NOVELL
V

a sodaine showre of raine over-tooke them; for avoyding whereof, they made all possible haste to a poore Countrey-mans Cottage, familiarly knowne to them both. Having continued there an indifferent while, and the raine unlikely to cease: to prevent all further protraction of time, and to arrive at Florence in due season; they borrowed two old cloakes of the poore man, of over-worn and ragged Country gray, as also two hoodes of the like Complexion, (because the poore man had no better) which did more mishape them, then their owne ugly deformity, and made them notoriously flouted and scorned, by all that met or over-tooke them.

After they had ridden some distance of ground, much moyled and bemyred with their shuffling Jades, flinging the dirt every way about them, that well they might be termed two filthy companions: the raine gave over, and the evening looking somewhat cleare, they began to confer familiarly together. Messer Forese, riding a lofty French trot, everie step being ready to hoise him out of his saddle, hearing Giotto's discrete answers to every ydle question he made (for indeede he was a very elegant speaker) began to peruse and surveigh him, even from the foote to the head, as we use to say. And perceiving him to be so greatly deformed, as no man could be worse, in his opinion: without any consideration of his owne mishaping as bad, or rather more unsightly then hee; in a scoffing laughing humour, hee saide. Giotto, doest thou imagine, that a stranger, who had never seene thee before, and should now happen into our companie, would beleeve thee to bee the best Painter in the world, as indeede thou art? Presently Giotto (without any further meditation) returned him this answer. Signior Forese, I think he might then beleeve it, when (beholding you) hee could imagine that you had learned your A. B. C. Which when Forese heard, he knew his owne error, and saw his payment returned in such Coine, as he sold his Wares for.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VI A yong and ingenious Scholler, being unkindly reviled and smitten by his ignorant Father, and through the procurement of an unlearned Vicare; afterward attained to be doubly revenged on him.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

Serving as an advertisement to unlearned Parents, not to bee over-rash, in censuring on Schollers perfections, through any badde or unbeseeming perswasions.

THE Ladies smiled very heartily, at the ready answer of Giotto; untill the Queene charged Madam Fiammetta, that shee should next succeed in order: whereupon, thus she began. The verie greatest infelicity that can happen to a man, and most insupportable of all other, is Ignorance; a word (I say) which hath bin so general, as under it is comprehended all imperfections whatsoever. Yet notwithstanding, whosoever can cull (graine by graine) the defects incident to humane race; will and must confesse, that wee are not all borne to knowledge: but onely such, whom the heavens illuminating by their bright radiance (wherein consisteth the sourse and well-spring of all science) by little and little, do bestow the influence of their bounty, on such and so manie as they please, who are to expresse themselves the more thankfull for such a blessing. And although this grace doth lessen the misfortune of many, which were over-mighty to bee in all; yet some there are, who by sawcie presuming on themselves, doe bewray their ignorance by theyr owne speeches; setting such behaviour on each matter, and soothing every thing with such gravity, even as if they would make comparison: or (to speake more properly) durst encounter in

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
VI

the Listes with great Salomon or Socrates. But let us leave them, and come to the matter of our purposed Novell.

In a certaine Village of Piccardie, there lived a Priest or Vicar, who being meerely an ignorant blocke, had yet such a peremptorie presuming spirite: as, though it was sufficiently discerned, yet hee beguiled many thereby, untill at last he deceyved himselfe, and with due chastisement to his folly.

A plaine Husbandman dwelling in the same Village, possessed of much Land and Living, but verie grosse and dull in understanding; by the entreaty of divers his Friends and Well-willers, some-thing more intelligable then himselfe: became incited, or rather provoked, to send a Sonne of his to the University of Paris, to study there as was fitting for a Scholler. To the end (quoth they) that having but this Son onely, and Fortunes blessings abounding in store for him: hee might likewise have the riches of the minde, which are those true treasures indeede, that Aristippus giveth us advice to be furnished withall.

His Friends perswasions having prevailed, and hee continued at Paris for the space of three yeares: what with the documents he had attayned to, before his going thither, and by meanes of a happie memory in the time of his being there, wherewith no young man was more singularly endued (in so short a while) he attained and performed the greater part of his Studies.

Now, as oftentimes it commeth to passe, the love of a Father (surmounting all other affections in man) made the olde Farmer desirous to see his Sonne: which caused his sending for him with all convenient speede, and obedience urged his as forward willingnesse thereto. The good olde man, not a little joyfull to see him in so good condition and health, and encreased so much in stature since his parting thence: familiarly told him, that he earnestly desired to know, if his minde and body had attained to a competent and equall growth, which within three or foure dayes he would put in practise.

THE DECAMERON

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No other helpe had he silly simple man, but Master Vicar must bee the questioner and poser of his s where in the Priest was very unwilling to meddle, feare of discovering his owne ignorance, which past under better opinion then he deserved. But the Farmer beeing importunate, and the Vicar many wayes behold to him, durst not returne deniall, but undertooke it v formally, as if he had bene an able man indeede.

But see how Fooles are borne to be fortunate, a where they least hope, there they find the best success the simplicitie of the Father, must be the meanes abusing his Schollerly Son, and a skreene to stand betwe the Priest and his ignorance. Earnest is the olde man know, what and how farre his Sonne had profited Schoole, and by what note he might best take understa ing of his answeres: which jumping fit with the Vic vanity, and a warrantable cloake to cover his knavery, appoints him but one word onely, namely *Nescio*, wherev if he answered to any of his demands, it was an evid token, that hee understood nothing. As thus they v walking and conferring in the Church, the Farmer carefull to remember the word *Nescio*: it came to p upon a sodaine, that the young man entred into them the great contentment of his Father, who prayed Ma Vicar, to make approbation of his Sonne, whether were learned, or no, and how hee had benefited at University?

After the time of the daies salutations had betweene them, the Vicar being subtle and crafty, a walked along by one of the tombs in the Church; pe with his finger to the Tombe, the Priest uttered words to the Scholler.

Quis hic est sepultus?

The yong Scholler (by reason it was erected si departure, and finding no inscription whereby to him) answered, as well hee might, *Nescio*. Imme the Father, keeping the word perfectly in his r grewe verie angerly passionate; and, desiring to

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more demaunds: gave him three or foure boxes on the eares; with many harsh and injurious speeches, tearing him an Asse and Villaine, and that he had not learned any thing. His Sonne was patient, and returned no answer, but plainly perceived, that this was a tricke intended against him, by the malicious treachery of the Priest, on whom (in time) he might be revenged.

Within a short while after, the Suffragane of those parts (under whom the Priest was but a Deputy, holding the benefice of him, with no great charge to his conscience) being abroad in his visitation, sent word to the Vicar, that he intended to preach there on the next Sunday, and hee to prepare in a readinesse, *Bonum et Commodum*, because hee would have nothing else to his dinner. Heereat Master Vicar was greatly amazed, because he had never heard such words before, neither could hee finde them in all his Breviarie. Hereupon, he went to the yong scholler, whom he had so lately before abused, and crying him mercy, with many impudent and shallow excuses, desired him to reveale the meaning of those words, and what he should understand by *Bonum et Commodum*.

The Scholler (with a sober and modest countenance) made answer; That he had bin over-much abused, which (neverthelesse) he tooke not so impatiently, but hee had already both forgot and forgiven it, with promise of comfort in this his extraordinary distraction, and greefe of minde. When he had perused the Suffraganes Letter, well observing the blushlesse ignorance of the Priest: seeming (by outward appearance) to take it strangely, he cried out alowd, saying; In the name of Vertue, what may be this mans meaning? How? (quoth the Priest) What manner of demand do you make? Alas, replied the Scholler, you have but one poore Asse, which I know you love deerely, and yet you must stew his genitories very daintily, for your Patron will have no other meat to his dinner. The genitories of mine Asse, answered the Priest? Passion of me, who then shall carrie my Corne to the Mill? There is no remedie, sayde the

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VI Scholler, for he hath so set it downe for an absolute resolution.

After that the Priest had considered thereon a while by himselfe, remembring the yearely renews, which clearely hee put up into his purse, to be ten times of farre greater worth then his Asse: he concluded to have him gelded, what danger soever should ensue thereon, preparing them in readinesse against his comming. So soone as the Suffragan was there arrived, heavily hee complained to him for his Asse: which kinde of Language he not understanding, knew not what he meant, nor how he should answer. But beeing (by the Scholler) acquainted with the whole History, he laughed heartily at the Priests ignorant folly, wishing that all such bold Bayards (from time to time) might be so served. Likewise, that all ignorant Priests, Vicars, and other Grashoppers of Townes or Villages, who sometimes have onely seene *Partes orationis quod sunt*, not to stand over-much on their owne sufficiency, grounded soly upon their Grammar; but to beware whom they jest withall, without meddling with Schollers, who take not injuries as dullards doe, least they prove infamous by their disputations.

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VII

Madam Phillippa, being accused by her Husband Rinaldo de Pugliese, because he tooke her in Adulterie, with a yong Gentleman named Lazarino de Guazzagliotri: caused her to bee cited before the Judge. From whom she delivered her selfe, by a sodaine, witty, and pleasant answer, and moderated a severe strict Statute, formerly made against women.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

Wherein is declared, of what worth it is to confesse a trueth, with a facetious and witty excuse.

AFTER that Madame Fiammetta had given over speaking, and all the Auditory had sufficiently applauded the Schollers honest revenge, the Queene enjoyned Philostratus, to proceede on next with his Novell, which caused him to begin thus. Beleeve me Ladies, it is an excellent and most commendable thing, to speak well, and to all purposes: but I hold it a matter of much greater worth, to know how to do it, and when necessity doth most require it. Which a Gentlewoman (of whom I am now to speake) was so well enstructed in, as not onely it yeeled the hearers mirthfull contentment, but likewise delivered her from the danger of death, as (in few words) you shal heare related.

In the Citie of Pirato, there was an Edict or Statute, no lesse blameworthy (to speake uprightly) then most severe and cruell, which (without making any distinction) gave strict command; That everie Woman should be burned with fire, whose husband found her in the acte of Adultery, with any secret or familiar friend, as one deserving to bee

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thus abandoned, like such as prostituted their bodies to publike sale or hire. During the continuance of this sharpe Edict, it fortuned that a Gentlewoman, who was named Phillippa, was found in her Chamber one night, in the armes of a yong Gentleman of the same City, named Lazarino de Guazzagliotri, and by her owne husband, called Rinaldo de Pugliese, shee loving the young Gallant, as her owne life, because hee was most compleate in all perfections, and every way as deerey addicted to her.

This sight was so irkesome to Rinaldo, that, being overcom with extreame rage, hee could hardly containe from running on them, with a violent intent to kill them both: but feare of his owne life caused his forbearance, meaning to be revenged by some better way. Such was the heate of his spleene and fury, as, setting aside all respect of his owne shame: he would needs prosecute the rigour of the deadly Edict, which he held lawfull for him to do, although it extended to the death of his Wife. Heereupon, having witnesses sufficient, to approve the guiltinesse of her offence: a day being appointed (without desiring any other counsell) he went in person to accuse her, and required justice against her.

The Gentlewoman, who was of an high and undauntable spirite, as all such are, who have fixed their affection resolvedly, and love uppon a grounded deliberation: concluded, quite against the counsell and opinion of her Parents, Kindred, and Friends; to appeare in the Court, as desiring rather to dye, by confessing the trueth with a manly courage, then by denying it, and her love unto so worthy a person as he was, in whose arms she chanced to be taken; to live basely in exile with shame, as an eternall scandall to her race. So, before the Potestate, shee made her apparance, worthily accompanied both with men and women, all advising her to deny the acte: but she, not minding them or their perswasions, looking on the Judge with a constant countenance, and a voyce of settled resolve, craved to know of him, what hee demaunded of her?

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VII

The Potestate well noting her brave carriage, her singular beautie and praise-worthy parts, her words apparantly witnessing the heighth of her minde: beganne to take compassion on her, and doubted, least shee would confesse some such matter, as should enforce him to pronounce the sentence of death against her. But she boldly scorning all delayes, or any further protraction of time; demanded again, what was her accusation? Madame, answered the Potestate, I am sory to tel you, what needs I must, your husband (whom you see present heere) is the complainant against you, avouching, that he tooke you in the act of adultery with another man: and therefore he requireth, that, according to the rigour of the Statute heere in force with us, I should pronounce sentence against you, and (consequently) the infliction of death. Which I cannot do, if you confesse not the fact, and therefore be well advised, how you answer me, and tell me the truth, if it be as your Husband accuseth you, or no.

The Lady, without any dismay or dread at all, pleasantly thus replied. My Lord, true it is, that Rinaldo is my Husband, and that he found me, on the night named, betweene the Armes of Lazarino, where many times heeretofore he hath embraced mee, according to the mutuall love re-plighted together, which I deny not, nor ever will. But you know well enough, and I am certaine of it, that the Lawes enacted in any Countrey, ought to be common, and made with consent of them whom they concerne, which in this Edict of yours is quite contrarie. For it is rigorous against none, but poore women onely, who are able to yeeld much better content and satisfaction generally, then remaineth in the power of men to do. And moreover, when this Law was made, there was not any woman that gave consent to it, neither were they called to like or allow thereof: in which respect, it may deservedly be termed, an unjust Law. And if you will, in prejudice of my bodie, and of your owne soule, be the executioner of so unlawfull an Edict, it consisteth in your power to do as you please.

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VII

But before you proceede to pronounce any sentence, may it please you to favour me with one small request, namely, that you would demand of my Husband, if at all times, and whensoever he tooke delight in my company, I ever made any curiosity, or came to him unwillingly. Whereto Rinaldo, without tarrying for the Potestate to moove the question, sodainly answered; that (undoubtedly) his wife at all times, and oftner then he could request it, was never sparing of her kindnesse, or put him off with any deniall. Then the Lady, continuing on her former speeches, thus replied. Let me then demand of you my Lord, being our Potestate and Judge, if it be so, by my Husbands owne free confession, that he hath alwaies had his pleasure of me, without the least refusall in me, or contradiction; what should I doe with the over-plus remaining in mine owne power, and whereof he had no need? Would you have mee cast it away to the Dogges? Was it not more fitting for me, to pleasure therwith a worthy Gentleman, who was even at deaths doore for my love, then (my husbands surfetting, and having no neede of me) to let him lye languishing, and dye?

Never was heard such an examination before, and to come from a woman of such worth, the most part of the honourable Pratosians (both Lords and Ladies) being there present, who hearing her urge such a necessary question, cryed out all aloud together with one voice (after they had laughed their fill) that the Lady had saide well, and no more then she might. So that, before they departed thence, by comfortable advice proceeding from the Potestate: the Edict (being reputed overcruell) was modified, and interpreted to concerne them onely, who offered injurie to their Husbands for money. By which meanes, Rinaldo standing as one confounded, for such a foolish and unadvised enterprize, departed from the Auditorie: and the Ladie, not a little joyfull to bee thus freed and delivered from the fire, returned home with victorie to her owne house.

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
VIII

Fresco da Celatico, counselled and advised his Neece Cesca: That if such as deserved to be looked on, were offensive to her eyes, as she had often told him; she should forbear to looke on any.

THE EIGHTH NOVELL

In just scorne of such unsightly and ill-pleasing surly Sluts, who imagine none to be faire or well-favoured, but themselves.

ALL the while as Philostratus was re-counting his Novell; it seemed, that the Ladies (who heard it) found themselves much mooved thereat, as by the wanton blood mounting up into their cheekes, it plainly appeared. But in the end, looking on each other with strange behaviour, they could not forbear smiling: which the Queene interrupting by a command of attention, turning to Madame Æmillia, willed her to follow next. When she, puffing and blowing, as if she had bene newly awaked from sleepe, began in this manner.

Faire Beauties; My thoughts having wandred a great distance hence, and further then I can easily collect them together againe; in obedience yet to our Queene, I shall report a much shorter Novell, then otherwise (perhappes) I should have done, if my minde had beene a little neerer home. I shall tell you the grosse fault of a foolish Damosell, well corrected by a witty reprehension of her Unckle; if shee had bin endued but with so much sence, as to have understood it.

An honest man, named Fresco da Celatico, had a good fulsom wench to his Neece, who for her folly and squemishnes, was generally called Cesta, or nice Francesca. And although she had stature sufficient, yet none of the hand-

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NOVELL VIII

somest, and a good hard favoured countenance, nothing nere such Angelical beauties as we have seen; yet she was endued with such height of minde, and so proud an opinion of her selfe, that it appeared as a custome bred in hir, or rather a gift bestowed on hir by nature (thogh none of the best) to blame and despise both men and women, yea who-soever she lookt on; without any consideration of her self, she being as unsightly, ill shaped, and ugly faced, as a worse was very hardly to be found.

Nothing could be done at any time, to yeilde her liking or content: moreover, she was so waspish, nice, and squemish, that when she cam into the royall Court of France, it was hatefull and contemptible to hir. Whensoever she went through the streets, every thing stunke and was noisome to her; so that she never did any thing but stop her nose; as if all men or women she met withall; and whatsoever else she lookt on, were stinking and offensive. But let us leave all further relation of her ill conditions, being every way (indeed) so bad, and hardly becomming any sensible body, that we cannot condemne them so much as we should.

It chanced upon a day, that shee comming home to the house where her Unckle dwelt, declared her wonted scurvy and scornfull behaviour; swelling, puffing, and pouting extreamly, in which humor she sat downe by her Unckle, who desiring to know what had displeased her, said. Why how now Francesca? what may the meaning of this bee? This being a solemne festivall day, what is the reason of your so soone returning home? She coily biting the lip, and brideling her head, as if she had bene some mans best Gelding, sprucely thus replied.

Indeede you say true Unckle, I am come home verie earely, because, since the day of my birth, I never saw a City so pestered with unhandsome people, both men and women, and worse this high Holyday, then ever I did observe before. I walked thorow some store of streetes, and I could not see one proper man: and as for the women, they are the most mishapen and ugly creatures, that, if God had made me such an one, I should be sory that ever

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
VIII

I was borne. And being no longer able to endure such displeasing sights; you wil not thinke (Unckle) in what an anger I am come home. Fresco, to whome these stinking qualities of his Neece seemed so unsufferable, that hee could not (with patience) endure them any longer, thus short and quickly answered. Francesca, if all people of our Citie (both men and women) be so odious in thy eyes, and offensive to thy nose, as thou hast often reported to me: bee advised then by my counsell. Stay stil at home, and look upon none but thy selfe onely, and then thou shalt be sure that they cannot displease thee. But shee, being as empty of wit as a pith-lesse Cane, and yet thought her judgement to exceed Salomons, could not understand the lest part of hir Unkles meaning, but stood as senselesse as a sheepe. Onely she replied, that she would resort to some other parts of the country, which if shee found as weakly furnished of handsome people, as heere shee did, shee would conceive better of her selfe, then ever she had done before.

Signior Guido Cavalcante, with a sodaine and witty answer, reprehended the rash folly of certaine Florentine Gentlemen, that thought to scorne and flout him.

THE NINTH NOVELL

Notably discovering the great difference that is betweene learning and ignorance, upon judicious apprehension.

WHEN the Queene perceived, that Madame Æmillia was discharged of her Novell, and none remained now to speake next, but onely her selfe, his priviledge alwayes remembred, to whom it belonged to be the last, she began in this manner.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL IX

Faire Company, you have this day disappointed me of two Novells at the least, whereof I had intended to make use. Neverthelesse, you shall not imagine mee so unfurnished, but that I have left one in store; the conclusion whereof, may minister such instruction, as will not bee reputed for ydle and impertinent: but rather of such materiall consequence, as better hath not this day past among us.

Understand then (most faire Ladies) that in former times long since past, our Cittie had many excellent and commendable customes in it; whereof (in these unhappy dayes of ours) we cannot say that poore one remaineth, such hath beene the too much encrease of Wealth and Covetousnesse, the onely supplanters of all good qualities whatsoever. Among which lawdable and friendly observations, there was one well deserving note, namely, that in divers places of Florence, men of the best houses in every quarter, had a sociable and neighbourly assemblie together, creating their company to consist of a certaine number, such as were able to supply their expences; as this day one, and to morrow another: and thus in a kinde of friendly course, each daily furnished the Table, for the rest of the company. Oftentimes, they did honour to divers Gentlemen and strangers, upon their arrivall in our Cittie, by inviting them into their assembly, and many of our worthiest Citizens beside; so that it grew to a customary use, and one especially day in the yeare appointed, in memory of this so loving a meeting, when they would ride (triumphally as it were) on horsebacke thorow the Cittie, sometimes performing Tilts, Tourneyes, and other Martiall exercises, but they were reserved for Festivall dayes.

Among which company, there was one called, Signior Betto Bruneleschi, who was earnestly desirous, to procure Signior Guido Cavalcante de Cavalcanti, to make one in this their friendly society. And not without great reason: for, over and beside his being one of the best Logitians as those times could not yeeld a better: He was also a most absolute naturall Philosopher (which worthy qualities were

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
IX

little esteemed among these honest meeters) a very friendly Gentleman, singularly well spoken, and whatsoever else was commendable in any man, was no way wanting in him, being wealthy withall, and able to returne equall honors, where he found them to be duly deserved, as no man therin could go beyond him. But Signior Betto, notwithstanding his long continued importunitie, could not draw him into their assembly, which made him and the rest of his company conceive, that the solitude of Guido, retiring himselfe alwaies from familiar conversing with men: provoked him to many curious speculations: and because he retained some part of the Epicurean Opinion, their vulgare judgement passed on him, that his speculations tended to no other end, but onely to finde out that which was never done.

It chanced upon a day, that Signior Guido departing from the Church of Saint Michael d'Horta, and passing along by the Adamari, so farre as to Saint Johns Church, which evermore was his customarie Walke: many goodly Marble Tombes were then about the saide Church, as now adayes are at Saint Reparata, and divers more beside. He entring among the Collumbes of Porphiry, and the other Sepulchers being there, because the doore of the Church was shut: Signior Betto and his companie, came riding from S. Reparata, and espying Signior Guido among the graves and tombes, said. Come, let us go make some jests to anger him. So putting the spurs to their horses, they rode apace towards him: and being upon him before he perceived them, one of them said. Guido thou refuseth to be one of our society, and seekest for that which never was: when thou hast found it, tell us, what wilt thou do with it?

Guido seeing himselfe round engirt with them, sodainly thus replyed: Gentlemen, you may use mee in your owne house as you please. And setting his hand on one of the Tombes (which was some-what great) he tooke his rising, and leapt quite over it on the further side, as being of an agile and sprightly body, and being thus freed from them, he went away to his owne lodging. They stooode all like

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NOVELL
IX

men amazed, strangely looking one upon another, and began afterward to murmure among themselves: That Guido was a man without any understanding, and the answer which he had made unto them, was to no purpose, neither favoured of any discretion, but meerely came from an empty brain because they had no more to do in the place where now they were, then any of the other Citizens, and Signior Guido (himself) as little as any of them; whereto Signior Betto thus replied.

Alas Gentlemen, it is you your selves that are void of understanding: for, if you had but observed the answer which he made unto us: hee did honestly, and (in verie few words) not onely notably expresse his owne wisdom, but also deservedly reprehend us. Because, if wee observe things as we ought to doe, Graves and Tombes are the houses of the dead, ordained and prepared to be their latest dwellings. He tolde us moreover, that although we have heere (in this life) other habitations and abidings; yet these (or the like) must at last be our houses. To let us know, and all other foolish, indiscreete, and unlearned men, that we are worse then dead men, in comparison of him, and other men equall to him in skill and learning. And therefore, while wee are heere among these Graves and Monuments, it may well be said, that we are not farre from our owne houses, or how soone we shall be possessors of them, in regard of the frailty attending on us.

Then every one could presently say, that Signior Guido had spoken nothing but the truth, and were much ashamed of their owne folly, and shallow estimation which they had made of Guido, desiring never more after to meddle with him so grossely, and thanking Signior Betto, for so well reforming their ignorance, by his much better apprehension.

THE SIXT DAY

NOVELL
X

Fryer Onyon, promised certaine honest people of the Countrey, to shew them a Feather of the same Phoenix, that was with Noah in his Arke. In sted whereof, he found Coales, which he avouched to be those very coals, wherewith the same Phoenix was roasted.

THE TENTH NOVELL

Wherein may be observed, what palpable abuses do many times passe, under the counterfeit Cloake of Religion.

WHEN all of them had delivered their Novels, Dioneus knowing, that it remained in him to relate the last for this day: without attending for any solemne command (after he had imposed silence on them, that could not sufficiently commend the witty reprehension of Guido), thus he began. Wise and worthy Ladies, although by the priviledge you have granted, it is lawfull for me to speake any thing best pleasing to my self: yet notwithstanding, it is not any part of my meaning, to varrie from the matter and method, whereof you have spoken to very good purpose. And therefore, following your foot-steppes, I intend to tell you, how craftily, and with a Rampiar sodainly raised in his owne defence: a Religious Frier of Saint Anthonies Order, shunned a shame, which two wily companions had prepared for him. Nor let it offend you, if I run into more large discourse, then this day hath bene used by any, for the apter compleating of my Novell: because, if you well observe it, the Sun is as yet in the midst of heaven, and therefore you may the better forbear me.

Certaldo, as (perhaps) you know, or have heard, is a Village in the Vale of Elsa, and under the authority and

THE DECAMERON

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commaund of our Florence, which although it be but small : yet (in former times) it hath bin inhabited with Gentlemen, and people of especial respect. A religious Friar of S. Anthonies Order, named Friar Onyon, had long time used to resort thither, to receive the benevolent almes, which those charitably affected people in simplicity gave him, and chiefly at divers daies of the year, when their bounty and devotion would extend themselves more largely then at other seasons. And so much the rather, because they thought him to be a good Pastor of holy life in outward appearance, and carried a name of much greater matter, then remained in the man indeed ; beside, that part of the country yeilded far more plentifull abundance of Onyons, then all other in Tuscany elsewhere, a kinde of foode greatly affected by those Friars, as men alwaies of hungry and good appetite. This Friar Onyon was a man of litle stature, red haire, a chearfull countenance, and the world afforded not a more crafty companion, then he. Moreover, albeit he had very little knowledge or learning, yet he was so prompt, ready and voluble of speech, uttering often he knew not what himselfe : that such as were not wel acquainted with his qualities, supposed him to be a singular Rhetoritian, excelling Cicero or Quintilian themselves ; and he was a gossip, friend, or deerely affected, by every one dwelling in those parts. According to his wonted custome, one time he went thither in the month of August, and on a Sunday morning, when all the dwellers thereabout, were present to heare Masse, and in the chiefest Church above all the rest : when the Friar saw time convenient for his purpose, he advanced himselfe, and began to speake in this manner.

Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, you know you have kept a commendable custome, in sending yeerly to the poore brethren of our Lord Baron S. Anthony, both of your Corne and other provision, some more, some lesse, all according to their power, means, and devotion, to the end that blessed S. Anthony should be the more carefull of your oxen, sheep, asses, swine, pigs, and other cattle. Moreover, you have used to pay (especially such as have their names registred

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in our Fraternity) those duties which annually you send unto us. For the collection whereof, I am sent by my Superior, namely our L. Abbot, and therefore (with Gods blessing) you may come after noone hither, when you shal heare the Bels of the Church ring: then wil I make a predication to you; you shall kisse the Crosse, and beside, because I know you al to be most devout servants to our Lord Baron S. Anthony, in especiall grace and favor, I wil shew you a most holy and goodly Relique, which I my selfe (long since) brought from the holy Land beyond the seas. If you desire to know what it is, let me tell you, that it is one of the Feathers of the same Phoenix, which was in the Arke with the Patriarch Noah. And having thus spoken, he became silent, returning backe to heare Masse. While hee delivered these and the like speeches, among the other people then in the church, there were two shrewde and crafty Companions; the one, named John de Bragoniero, and the other, Biagio Pizzino. These subtil Fellowes, after they had heard the report of Fryer Onyons Relique: although they were his intimate friends, and came thither in his company; yet they concluded betweene themselves, to shew him a tricke of Legierdumaine, and to steale the Feather from him. When they had intelligence of Friar Onyons dining that day at the Castle, with a worthy Friend of his: no sooner was he set at the Table, but away went they in all haste, to the Inne where the Fryar frequented, with this determination, that Biagio should hold conference with the Friars boy, while his fellow ransackt the Wallet, to finde the Feather, and carry it away with him, for a future observation, what the Friar would say unto the people, when he found the losse of the Feather, and could not performe his promise to them.

The Fryars Boy, whom some called Guccio Balena, some Guccio Imbrata, and others Guccio Porco, was such a knavish Lad, and had so many bad qualities, as Lippo Topo the cunning Painter, or the most curious Poeticall wit, had not any ability to describe them. Friar Onyon himself did often observe his behaviour, and would make this report

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among his Friends. My Boy (quoth he) hath nine rare qualities in him, and such they are, as if Salomon, Aristotle, or Seneca had onely but one of them: it were sufficient to torment and trouble all their vertue, all their senses, and all their sanctity. Consider then, what manner of man he is like to be, having nine such rarities, yet voide of all vertue, wit, or goodnes. And when it was demaunded of Friar Onyon, what these nine rare conditions were: hee having them all readie by heart, and in rime, thus answered.

Boyes I have knowne, and seene,

And heard of many:

But,

For Lying, Loytring, Lazinessse,

For Facing, Filching, Filthinesse;

For Carelesse, Gracelesse, all Unthriftnesse,

My Boy excelleth any.

Now, over and beside all these admirable qualities, hee hath manie more such singularities, which (in favour towards him) I am faine to conceale. But that which I smile most at in him, is, that he would have a Wife in every place where he commeth, yea, and a good house to boot too: for, in regard his beard beginneth to shew it selfe, rising thicke in haire, blacke and amiable, he is verily perswaded, that all Women will fall in love with him; and if they refuse to follow him, he will in all hast run after them. But truly, he is a notable servant to mee, for I cannot speake with any one, and in never so great secrecy, but he will be sure to heare his part; and when any question is demanded of me, he standes in such awe and feare of my displeasure: that he will bee sure to make the first answer, yea or no, according as he thinketh it most convenient.

Now, to proceede where we left, Friar Onyon having left this serviceable youth at his lodging, to see that no bodie should meddle with his commodities, especially his Wallet, because of the sacred things therein contained: Guccio Imbrata, who as earnestly affected to be in the Kitchin, as Birds to hop from branch to branch, especially, when anie of the Chamber-maides were there, espyed one of the Hostesses

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Female attendants, a grosse fat Trugge, low of stature, ill faced, and worse formed, with a paire of brests like two bumbards, smelling loathsomely of grease and sweate; downe shee descended into the Kitchin, like a Kite upon a peece of Carion. This Boy, or Knave, chuse whither you will style him, having carelesly left Fryar Onyons Chamber doore open, and all the holy things so much to be neglected, although it was then the moneth of August, when heate is in the highest predominance, yet hee would needs sit downe by the fire, and began to conferre with this amiable creature, who was called by the name of Nuta.

Being set close by her, he told her, that he was a Gentleman by Atturniship, and that he had more millions of Crownes, then all his life time would serve him to spend; beside those which he payed away dayly, as having no convenient imployment for them. Moreover, he knew how to speake, and do such things, as were beyond wonder or admiration. And, never remembring his olde tattered Friars Cowle, which was so snottie and greazie, that good store of kitchin stuffe might have beene boiled out of it; as also a foule slovenly Trusse or halfe doublet, all baudied with bow-sing, fat greazie lubberly sweating, and other drudgeries in the Convent Kitchin, where he was an Officer in the meanest credite. So that to describe this sweet youth in his lively colours, both for naturall perfections of body, and artificiall composure of his Garments; never came the fowlest silks out of Tartaria or India, more ugly or unsightly to bee lookt upon. And for a further addition to his neate knavery, his breeches were so rent betweene his legges, his shooes and stockings had bin at such a mercilesse massacre: that the gallantest Commandador of Castile (though he had never so lately bin releast out of slavery) could have wisht for better garments, then he; or make larger promises, then he did to his Nuta. Protesting to entitle her as his onely, to free her from the Inne and Chamber thraldomes, if she would live with him, be his Love, partaker of his present possessions, and so to succeed in his future Fortunes. All which bravadoes, though they were belcht foorth with admirable

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X braggadochio behaviours do, and he was as wise at the
 ending, as when he began.

Our former named two craftie Companions, seeing Guccio Porco so seriously employed about Nuta, was there-with not a little contented, because their intended labour was now more then halfe ended. And perceiving no contradiction to crosse their proceeding, into Friar Onyons chamber entred they, finding it ready open for their purpose: where the first thing that came into their hand in search, was the wallet. When they had opened it, they found a small Cabinet, wrapped in a great many foldings of rich Taffata; and having unfolded it, a fine formall Key was hanging thereat: wherewith having unlockt the Cabinet, they found a faire Feather of a Parrots taile, which they supposed to bee the verie same, that he meant to shew the people of Certaldo. And truly (in those dayes) it was no hard matter to make them beleieve any thing, because the idle vanities of Egypt and those remoter parts, had not (as yet) bin seene in Tuscany, as since then they have bin in great abundance, to the utter ruine (almost) of Italy.

And although they might then be knowne to very few, yet the inhabitants of the Country generally, understoode little or nothing at all of them. For there, the pure simplicities of their ancient predecessours still continuing; they had not seene any Parrots, or so much as heard any speech of them. Wherefore the two crafty consorts, not a little joyfull of finding the Feather, tooke it thence with them, and beecause they would not leave the Cabinet empty, espying Char-coales lying in a corner of the Chamber, they filled it with them, wrapping it up againe in the Taffata, and in as demure manner as they found it. So, away came they with the Feather, neither seene or suspected by any one, intending now to heare what Friar Onyon would say, uppon the losse of his precious Relique, and finding the Coales there placed insted thereof.

The simple men and women of the country, who had bin at morning Masse in the Church, and heard what a wonderful

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Feather they should see in the after noone, returned in all hast to their houses, where one telling this newes to another, and gossip with gossip consulting theron; they made the shorter dinner, and afterward flocked in maine troopes to the Castle, contending who shold first get entrance, such was their devotion to see the holy feather. Friar Onyon having dined, and reposed a litle after his wine, he arose from the table to the window, where beholding what multitudes came to see the feather, he assured himselfe of good store of mony. Hereupon, he sent to his Boy Guccio Imbrata, that uppon the Bels ringing, he should come and bring the wallet to him. Which (with much ado) he did, so soone as his quarrell was ended in the kitchin, with the amiable Chamber-maid Nuta, away then he went with his holy commodities: where he was no sooner arrived, but because his belly was readie to burst with drinking water, he sent him to the Church to ring the bells, which not onely would warme the cold water in his belly, but likewise make him run as gaunt as a Grey-hound.

When all the people were assembled in the Church together, Friar Onyon (never distrusting any injurie offered him, or that his close commodities had bin medled withal) began his predication, uttering a thousand lies to fit his purpose. And when he came to shew the feather of the Phoenix (having first in great devotion finisht the confession) he caused two goodly torches to be lighted, and ducking downe his head three severall times, before hee would so much as touch the Taffata, he opened it with much reverence. So soone as the Cabinet came to be seen, off went his Hood, lowly he bowed downe his body, and uttering especial praises of the Phoenix, and sacred properties of the wonderfull Relique, the Cover of the Cabinet being lifted uppe, he saw the same to bee full of Coales. He could not suspect his Villaine boy to do this deede, for he knew him not to be endued with so much wit, onely hee curst him for keeping it no better, and curst himselfe also, for reposing trust in such a careles knave, knowing him to be slothfull, disobedient, negligent, and void of all honest

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understanding or grace. Sodainly (without blushing) lest his losse should be discerned, he lifted his lookes and hands to heaven, speaking out so loude, as every one might easily heare him, thus: O thou omnipotent providence, for ever let thy power be praised. Then making fast the Cabinet againe, and turning himselfe to the people, with lookes expressing admiration, he proceeded in this manner.

Lords, Ladies, and you the rest of my worthy Auditors: You are to understand, that I (being then very young) was sent by my Superiour, into those parts, where the Sun appeareth at his first rising. And I had received charge by expresse command, that I should seeke for (so much as consisted in my power to do) the especiall vertues and priviledges belonging to Porcellane, which although the boyling thereof bee worth but little, yet it is very profitable to any but us. In regard whereof, being upon my journey, and departing from Venice, passing along the Borgo de Grecia, I proceeded thence (on horseback) through the Realme of Garbo, so to Baldacca, till I came to Parione; from whence, not without great extremity of thirst, I arrived in Sardignia.

But why do I trouble you with the repetition of so many countries? I coasted on still, after I had past Saint Georges Arme, into Truffia, and then into Buffia, which are Countries much inhabited, and with great people. From thence I went into the Land of Lying, where I found store of the Brethren of our Religion, and many other beside, who shunned all paine and labour, onely for the love of God, and cared as little, for the paines and travailes which others tooke, except some benefit arised thereby to them; nor spend they any money in this Country, but such as is without stampe. Thence I went into the Land of Abruzzi, where the men and women goe in Galoches over the Mountaines, and make them garments of their Swines guts. Not farre from thence, I found people, that carried bread in their staves, and wine in Satchels, when parting from them, I arrived among the Mountaines of Bacchus, where all the waters run downe with a deepe fall, and in short time, I went on so far, that I found my selfe to be in India Pastinaca; where I swear to

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you by the holy habit which I weare on my body, that I saw Serpents flye, things incredible, and such as were never seene before.

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But because I would be loth to lye, so soone as I departed thence, I met with Maso de Saggio, who was a great Merchant there, and whom I found cracking Nuts, and selling Cockles by retale. Neverthelesse, al this while I could not finde what I sought for, and therefore I was to passe from hence by water, if I intended to travaile thither, and so in returning back, I came into the Holy Land, where coole fresh bread is sold for foure pence, and the hot is given away for nothing. There I found the venerable Father (blame me not I beseech you) the most woorthie Patriarch of Jerusalem, who for the reverence due to the habite I weare, and love to our Lord Baron Saint Anthony, would have me to see al the holy Reliques, which he had there under his charge: wherof there were so many, as if I should recount them all to you, I never could come to a conclusion. But yet, not to leave you discomforted, I will relate some few of them to you.

First of all, he shewed me the finger of the holy Ghost, so whole and perfect, as ever it was. Next, the nose of the Cherubin, which appeared to Saint Frances; with the payring of the naile of a Seraphin; and one of the ribbes of Verbum caro, fastened to one of the Windowes, covered with the holy garments of the Catholique Faith. Then he tooke me into a darke Chappel, where he shewed me divers beames of the Starre that appeared to the three Kings in the East. Also a Violl of Saint Michaels sweate, when he combattted with the divell: And the jaw-bone of dead Lazarus, with many other precious things beside. And because I was liberall to him, giving him two of the Plaines of Monte Morello, in the Vulgare Edition, and some of the Chapters del Caprezio, which he had long laboured in search of; he bestowed on me some of his Reliques.

First, he gave me one of the eye-teeth of Santa Crux; and a litle Violl, filled with some part of the sound of those Belles, which hung in the sumptuous Temple of

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Salomon. Next, he gave mee the Feather of the Phoenix, which was with Noah in the Arke, as before I told you. And one of the Wooden Pattens, which the good Saint Gerrard de Magnavilla used to weare in his travailes, and which I gave (not long since) to Gerrardo di Bousy at Florence, where it is respected with much devotion. Moreover, he gave me a few of those Coales, wherewith the Phoenix of Noah was roasted; all which things I brought away thence with me. Now, most true it is, that my Superiour would never suffer mee to shew them any where, untill he was faithfully certified, whether they were the same precious Reliques, or no. But perceyving by sundrie Myracles which they have wrought, and Letters of sufficient credence receyved from the reverend Patriarch, that all is true, he hath graunted me permission to shew them, and because I wold not trust any one with matters of such moment, I my selfe brought them hither with me.

Now I must tell you, that the Feather of the same Phoenix, I conveyed into a small Cabinet or Casket, because it should not be bent or broken. And the Coales wherewith the said Phoenix was roasted, I put into another Casket, in all respects so like to the former, that many times I have taken one for another. As now at this instant it hath bin my fortune: for, imagining that I brought the Casket with the feather, I mistooke my self, and brought the other with the coales. Wherein doubtles I have not offended, because I am certaine, that we of our Order do not any thing, but it is ordred by divine direction, and our blessed Patron the Lorde Baron Saint Anthony. And so much the rather, because about a senight hence, the Feast of Saint Anthony is to bee solemnized, against the preparation whereof, and to kindle your zeale with the greater fervencie: he put the Casket with the Coales into my hand, meaning, to let you see the Feather, at some more fitting season. And therefore my blessed Sonnes and Daughters, put off your Bonnets, and come hither with devotion to looke upon them. But first let me tell you, whosoever is marked by any of these Coales, with the signe of the

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Crosse: he or she shal live all this yeare happily, and no fire whatsoever shall come neere to touch or hurt them. So, singing a solemne Antheme in the praise of S. Anthony, he unveyled the Casket, and shewed the Coales openly.

The simple multitude, having (with great admiration and reverence) a long while beheld them, they thronged in crouds to Fryar Onyon, giving him farre greater offerings, then before they had, and entreating him to marke them each after other. Whereupon, he taking the coales in his hand, began to marke their garments of white, and the veyles on the Womens heads, with Crosses of no meane extendure: affirming to them, that the more the Coales wasted with making those great crosses, the more they still encreased in the Casket, as often before hee had made triall.

In this manner, having crossed all the Certaldanes (to his great benefit) and their abuse: he smiled at his sodaine and dexterious devise, in mockery of them, who thought to have made a scorne of him, by dispossessing him of the Feather. For Bragoniero and Pizzino, being present at his Learned predication, and having heard what a cunning shift he found, to come off cleanly, without the least detection, and all delivered with such admirable protestations: they were faine to forsake the Church, least they should have burst with laughing.

But when all the people were parted and gone, they met Friar Onyon at his Inne, where closely they discovered to him, what they had done, delivering him his Feather againe: which the yeare following, did yeeld him as much money, as now the Coales had done.

This Novell afforded equall pleasing to the whole companie, Friar Onyons Sermon being much commended, but especially his long Pilgrimage, and the Reliques he had both seene, and brought home with him. Afterward, the Queene perceiving, that her reigne had now the full expiration, graciously she arose, and taking the Crowne from

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I make no doubt (bright Beauties) but you many times have seene as good, or a better King among the Chessemen, then I am. But yet of a certainty, if you would be obedient to me, as you ought in dutie unto a true King: I should grant you a liberall freedome of that, wherein you take the most delight, and without which, our choisest desires can never be compleate. Neverthelesse, I meane, that my government shal be according to mine owne minde. So, causing the Master of the Houshold to be called for, as all the rest were wont to do for conference with him: he gave him direction, for al things fitting the time of his Regiment, and then turning to the Ladies, thus he proceeded.

Honest Ladies, we have alreadie discoursed of variable devises, and so many severall manners of humane industry, concerning the busines wherewith Lacisca came to acquaint us: that her very words, have ministred me matter, sufficient for our morrowes conference, or else I stand in doubt, that I could not have devised a more convenient Theame for us to talke on. She (as you have all heard) saide, that shee had not anie neighbour, who came a true Virgin to her Husband, and added moreover, that she knew some others, who had beguiled their Husbandes, in very cunning and crafty manner. But setting aside the first part, concerning the prooffe of children, I conceive the second to bee more apte for our intended argument. In which respect, my will is (seeing Lacisca hath given us so good an occasion) that our discoursing to morow, may onely concerne such slye cunning and deceits, as women have heeretofore used, for satisfying their owne appetites, and beguiling their Hus-

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bands, without their knowledge, or suspition, and cleanly escaping with them, or no. NOVELL
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This argument seemed not very pleasing to the Ladies, and therefore they urged an alteration thereof, to some matter better suting with the day, and their discoursing: whereto thus he answered. Ladies, I know as well as your selves, why you would have this instant argument altered: but, to change me from it you have no power, considering the season is such, as shielding all (both men and women) from meddling with any dishonest action; it is lawfull for us to speake of what wee please. And know you not, that through the sad occasion of the time, which now overruleth us, the Judges have forsaken their venerable benches, the Lawes (both divine and humane) ceasing, granting ample license to every one, to do what best agreeth with the conservation of life? Therefore, if your honesties doe straine themselves a little, both in thinking and speaking, not for prosecution of any immodest deede, but onely for familiar and blamelesse entercourse: I cannot devise a more convenient ground, at least that carrieth apparant reason, for reproofe of perils, to ensue by any of you. Moreover, your company, which hath bin most honest, since the first day of our meeting, to this instant: appeareth not any jot to be disgraced, by any thing either said or done, neither shal be (I hope) in the meanest degree.

And what is he, knowing your choise and vertuous dispositions, so powerfull in their owne prevailing, that wanton words cannot misguide your wayes, no nor the terror of death it selfe, that dare insinuate a distempred thought? But admit, that some slight or shallow judgements, hearing you (perhaps sometimes) talke of such amorous follies, should therefore suspitiously imagine you to be faulty, or else you would bee more sparing of speech? Their wit and censure are both alike, savouring rather of their owne vile nature, who would brand others with their basebred imperfections. Yet ther is another consideration beside, of som great injury offered to mine honor, and whereof I know not how you can acquit your selves.

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I that have bin obedient to you all, and borne the heavy load of your businesse, having now (with full consent) created mee your King, you would wrest the law out of my hands, and dispose of my authoritie as you please. Forbeare (gentle Ladies) all frivolous suspitions, more fit for them that are full of bad thoughts, then you, who have true Vertue shining in your eyes; and therefore, let every one freely speake their minde, according as their humors best pleaseth them.

When the Ladies heard this, they made answer, that all should bee answerable to his minde. Whereupon, the King gave them all leave to dispose of themselves till supper time. And because the Sun was yet very high, in regard all the re-counted Novels had bin so short: Dioneus went to play at the Tables with another of the yong Gentlemen, and Madame Eliza, having withdrawne the Ladies aside, thus spake unto them. During the time of our being heere, I have often bene desirous to let you see a place somewhat neere at hand, and which I suppose you have never seene, it being called The Valley of Ladies. Till now, I could not finde any convenient time to bring you thither, the Sunne continuing still aloft, which fitteth you with the apter leysure, and the sight (I am sure) can no way discontent you.

The Ladies replied, that they were all ready to walk with her thither: and calling one of their women to attend on them, they set on, without speaking a word to any of the men. And within the distance of halfe a mile, they arrived at the Valley of Ladies, wherinto they entred by a strait passage at the one side, from whence there issued forth a cleare running River. And they found the saide Valley to bee so goodly and pleasant, especially in that season, which was the hottest of all the yeare; as all the world was no where able to yeeld the like. And, as one of the said Ladies (since then) related to mee, there was a plaine in the Valley so directly round, as if it had beene formed by a compasse, yet rather it resembled the Workmanship of Nature, then to be made by the hand of man:

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containing in circuite somewhat more then the quarter of a mile, environed with sixe small hils, of no great height, and on each of them stood a little Palace, shaped in the fashion of Castles.

The ground-plots descending from those hils or mountaines, grew lesse and lesse by variable degrees, as wee observe at entering into our Theaters, from the highest part to the lowest, succinctly to narrow the circle by order. Now, concerning these ground-plottes or little Meadowes, those which the Sun Southward looked on, were full of Vines, Olive-trees, Almond-trees, Cherry-trees, and Figge-trees, with divers other Trees beside, so plentifully bearing fruites, as you could not discerne a hands bredth of losse. The other Mountaines, whereon the Northerne windes blow, were curiously covered with small Thickets or Woods of Oakes, Ashes, and other Trees so greene and strait, as it was impossible to behold fairer. The goodly plaine it selfe, not having any other entrance, but where the Ladies came in, was planted with Trees of Firre, Cipresse, Laurell, and Pines; so singularly growing in formall order, as if some artificiall or cunning hand had planted them, the Sun hardly piercing through their branches, from the top to the bottome, even at his highest, or any part of his course.

All the whole field was richly spred with grasse, and such variety of delicate Flowers, as Nature yeilded out of her plenteous Store-house. But that which gave no lesse delight then any of the rest, was a smal running Brooke, descending from one of the Vallies, that divided two of the little hils, and fell through a Veine of the intire Rocke it selfe, that the fall and murmure thereof was most delightfull to heare, seeming all the way in the descent, like Quicke-silver, weaving it selfe into artificiall workes, and arriving in the plaine beneath, it was there receyved into a small Channell, swiftly running through the midst of the plaine, to a place where it stayed, and shaped it selfe into a Lake or Pond, such as our Citizens have in their Orchards or Gardens, when they please to make use of such a commodity.

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This Pond was no deeper, then to reach the breast of a man, and having no mud or soyle in it, the bottome thereof shewed like small beaten gravell, with prety pibble stones intermixed, which some that had nothing else to do, would sit downe and count them as they lay, as very easily they might. And not onely was the bottome thus apparantly seene, but also such plenty of Fishes swimming every way, as the mind was never to be wearied in looking on them. Nor was this water bounded in with any bankes, but onely the sides of the plain Medow, which made it appeare the more sightly, as it arose in swelling plenty. And alwayes as it super-abounded in his course, least it should overflow disorderly: it fell into another Channell, which conveying it along the lower Valley, ran forth to water other needfull places.

When the Ladies were arrived in this goodly valley, and upon advised viewing it, had sufficiently commended it: in regard the heat of the day was great, the place tempting, and the Pond free from sight of any, they resolved there to bathe themselves. Wherefore they sent the waiting Gentlewoman to have a diligent eye on the way where they entered, least any one should chance to steale upon them. All seven of them being stript naked, into the water they went, which hid their delicate white bodies, like as a cleare Glasse concealeth a Damask Rose within it. So they being in the Pond, and the water nothing troubled by their being there, they found much prety pastime together, running after the Fishes, to catch them with their hands, but they were over-quick and cunning for them. After they had delighted themselves there to their owne contentment, and were cloathed with their garments, as before: thinking it fit time for their returning backe againe, least their over-long stay might give offence, they departed thence in an easie pace, dooing nothing else all the way as they went, but extolling the Valley of Ladies beyond all comparison.

At the Palace they arrived in a due houre, finding the three Gentlemen at play, as they left them, to whom Madame Pampinea pleasantly thus spake. Now trust me

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Gallants, this day wee have very cunningly beguiled you. How now? answered Dioneus, begin you first to act, before you speake? Yes truly Sir, replied Madame Pampinea: Relating to him at large, from whence they came, what they had done there, the beautie of the place, and the distance thence. The King (upon hir excellent report) being very desirous to see it; sodainely commaunded Supper to be served in, which was no sooner ended, but they and their three servants (leaving the Ladies) walked on to the Valley, which when they had considered, no one of them having ever bin there before; they thought it to be the Paradise of the World.

They bathed themselves there likewise, as the Ladies formerlie had done, and being re-vested, returned backe to their Lodgings, because darke night drew on apace: but they found the Ladies dauncing, to a Song which Madame Fiammetta sung. When the dance was ended, they entertained the time with no other discourse, but onely concerning the Valley of Ladies, whereof they all spake liberally in commendations. Whereupon, the King called the Master of the Houshold, giving him command, that (on the morrow) dinner should be readie betimes, and bedding to be thence carried, if any desired rest at mid-time of the day.

All this being done, variety of pleasing Wines were brought, Banquetting stuffe, and other dainties; after which they fell to Dauncing. And Pamphilus, having receyved command to begin an especial dance, the King turned himselfe unto Madame Eliza, speaking thus. Faire Lady, you have done me so much honour this day, as to deliver mee the Crowne: in regard wherof, be you this night the Mistresse of the song: and let it be such as best may please your selfe. Whereunto Madam Eliza, with a modest blush arising in her face, replied; That his will should be fulfilled, and then (with a delicate voyce) she beganne in this manner.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL
X

THE SONG

The Chorus sung by all.

Love, if I can scape free from forth thy holde,
Beleeve it for a truth,
Never more shall thy falshoode me enfolde.

When I was yong, I entred first thy fights,
Supposing there to finde a solemne peace :
I threw off all my Armes, and with delights
Fed my poore hopes, as still they did encrease.
But like a Tyrant, full of rancorous hate,
Thou tookst advantage :
And I sought refuge, but it was too late.
Love, if I can scape free, etc.

But being thus surprized in thy snares,
To my misfortune, thou madst me her slave ;
Was onely borne to feede me with despaires,
And keepe me dying in a living grave.
For I saw nothing dayly fore mine eyes,
But rackes and tortures :
From which I could not get in any wise.
Love, if I can scape free, etc.

My sighes and teares I vented to the winde,
For none would heare or pittie my complaints ;
My torments still encreased in this kinde,
And more and more I felt these sharpe restraints.
Release me now at last from forth this hell.
Asswage thy rigour,
Delight not thus in cruelty to dwell.
Love, if I can scape free, etc.

If this thou wilt not grant, be yet so kinde,
Release me from those worse then servile bands,
Which new vaine hopes have bred, wherein I finde ;
Such violent feares, as comfort quite withstands.
Be now (at length) a little moov'd to pittie,
Be it nere so little :
Or in my death listen my Swan-like Dittie.
Love, if I can scape free from forth thy holde,
Beleeve it for a truth,
Never more shall thy falshood me enfolde.

After that Madame Eliza had made an end of her Song
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X

which shee sealed up with an heart-breaking sigh: they all sate amazedly wondering at her moanes, not one among them being able to conjecture, what should be the reason of her singing in this manner. But the King being in a good and pleasing temper, calling Tindaro, commaunded him to bring his Bagge-pipe, by the sound whereof they danced divers daunces: And a great part of the night being spent in this manner, they all gave over, and departed to their Chambers.

THE END OF THE SIXTH DAY

THE DECAMERON

THE SEVENTH DAY

When the Assembly being met together, and under the Regiment of Dioneus: the Discourses are directed, for the discoverie of such policies and deceites, as women have used for beguiling of their Husbandes, either in respect of their love, or for the prevention of some blame or scandall, escaping without sight, knowledge, or otherwise.

THE INDUCTION TO THE DAYES DISCOURSES



ALL the Starres were departed out of the East, but onely that, which we commonly cal bright Lucifer, or the Day-Star, gracing the morning very gloriously: when the Master of the household, being risen, went with all the provision, to the Valley of Ladies, to make everie thing in due and decent readines, according as his Lord over-night had commanded him. After which departure of his, it was not long before the King arose, beeing awaked with the noise which the carriages made; and when he was up, the other two Gentlemen and the Ladies were quickly readie soone after. On they set towards the Valley, even as the Sunne was rising: and all the

THE SEVENTH DAY

THE IN-
DUCTION

way as they went, never before had they heard so many sweete Nightingales, and other pretty Birds melodiously singing, as they did this morning, which keeping them company thoroughout the journey, they arrived at the Valley of Ladies, where it seemed to them, that infinit Quires of delicate Nightingales, and other Birds, had purposely made a meeting, even as it were to give them a glad welcome thither.

Divers times they walked about the Valley, never satisfied with viewing it from one end to the other; because it appeared farre more pleasing unto them, then it had done the precedent day: and because the dayes splendour was much more conforme to the beauty thereof. After they had broken their fast, with excellent Wines and Banquetting stuffe, they began to tune their instruments and sing; because (therein) the sweet Birds should not excell them, the Valley (with delicate Echoes) answering all their notes. When dinner time drew neere, the Tables were covered under the spreading trees, and by the goodly Ponds side, where they sate downe orderly by the Kings direction: and all dinner while, they saw the Fishes swimme by huge shoales in the Pond, which sometimes gave them occasion to talke, as well as gaze on them.

When dinner was ended, and the Tables withdrawne, in as jocond manner as before, they renewed againe their hermonious singing. In divers places of this pleasant Valley, were goodly field-Beds readily furnished, according as the Master of the Houshold gave enstruction, enclosed with Pavillions of costly stuffles, such as are sometimes brought out of France. Such as were so disposed, were licensed by the King to take their rest: and they that would not, he permitted them to their wonted pastimes, each according to their minds. But when they were risen from sleepe, and the rest from their other exercises, it seemed to be more then high time, that they should prepare for talke and conference. So, sitting downe on Turkey Carpets, which were spred abroad on the green grasse, and close by the place where they had dined: the King gave command, that

THE DECAMERON

THE IN- Madam Æmillia should first begin, whereto she willingly
DUCTION yeelding obedience, and expecting such silent attention, as
formerly had bin observed, thus she began.

John of Lorraine heard one knocke at his doore in the night time, whereuppon he awaked his Wife Monna Tessa. She made him beleewe, that it was a Spirit which knocked at the doore, and so they arose, going both together to conjure the Spirit with a prayer; and afterwarde, they heard no more knocking.

THE FIRST NOVELL

Reprehending the simplicity of some sottish Husbands: And discovering the wanton subtilties of some women, to compasse their unlawfull desires.

MY Gracious Lord (quoth Madame Æmillia) it had bene a matter highly pleasing to mee, that any other (rather then my selfe) should have begun to speake of this argument, which it hath pleased you to apoint. But seeing it is your Highnesse pleasure, that I must make a passage of assurance for all the rest; I will not be irregular, because obedience is our cheefe Article. I shall therefore (Gracious Ladies) strive, to speake something, which may bee advantageable to you heereafter, in regard, that if other women bee as fearfull as we, especially of Spirits, of which all our sexe have generally bin timorous (although, upon my credite, I know not what they are, nor ever could meete with any, to tell me what they be) you may, by the diligent observation of my Novell: learne a wholesome and holy prayer, very availeable, and of precious

THE SEVENTH DAY

power, to conjure and drive them away, whensoever they shall presume to assault you in any place. NOVELL
I

There dwelt sometime in Florence, and in the street of Saint Brancazio, a woollen Weaver, named John of Lorrayne; a man more happy in his Art, then wise in any thing else beside: because, savouring somewhat of the Gregorie, and (in very deede) little lesse then an Ideot; Hee was many times made Captain of the Woollen-Weavers, in the quarters belonging to Santa Maria Novella, and his house was the Schoole or receptacle, for all their meetings and assemblies. He had divers other petty Offices beside, by the dignity and authority whereof, hee supposed himselfe much exalted or elevated, above the common pitch of other men. And this humour became the more tractable to him, because he addicted himselfe oftentimes (as being a man of an easie inclination) to be a benefactor to the holy Fathers of Santa Maria Novella, giving (beside his other charitable Almes) to some one a paire of Breeches, to another a Hood, and to another a whole habit. In reward whereof, they taught him (by heart) many wholesome prayers, as the Pater noster in the vulgar tongue; the Song of Saint Alexis; the Lamentations of Saint Bernard, the Hymne of Madame Matilda, and many other such like matters, which he kept charily, and repeated usually, as tending to the salvation of his soule.

This man, had a very faire and lovely wife, named Monna Tessa, the daughter of Manuccio della Cuculia, wise and well advised; who knowing the simplicity of her Husband, and affecting Frederigo di Neri Pegolotti, who was a comely yong Gentleman, fresh, and in the floure of his time, even as she was, therefore they agreed the better together. By meanes of her Chamber-maid, Frederigo and shee met often together, at a Countrie Farme of John of Lorraynes, which hee had neere to Florence, and where she used to lodge all the Summer time, called Camerata, whether John resorted somtimes to Supper, and lodge for a night, returning home againe to his City house the next morning; yet often he would stay there longer with his owne companions.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL

I

Frederigo, who was no meane man in his Mistresses favor, and therefore these private meetings the more welcome to him; received a summons or assignation from her, to be there on such a night, when hir husband had no intent of comming thither. There they supped merrily together, and (no doubt) did other things, nothing appertaining to our purpose, she both acquainting, and well instructing him, in a dozen (at the least) of her Husbands devout prayers. Nor did shee make any account, or Frederigo either, that this should be the last time of their meeting, because (indeede) it was not the first: and therefore they set downe an order and conclusion together (because the Chambermaide must be no longer the messenger) in such manner as you shall heare.

Frederigo was to observe especially, that alwayes when hee went or came from his owne house, which stood much higher then John of Lorraines did, to looke upon a Vine, closely adjoyning to her house, where stood the scull of an Asses head, advanced upon an high pole; and when the face thereof looked towards Florence, he might safely come, it being an assured signe, that John kept at home. And if he found the doore fast shut, he should softly knocke three severall times, and thereon bee admitted entrance. But if the face stood towards Fiesola; then he might not come, for it was the signe of Johns being there, and then there might be no meddling at all.

Having thus agreed upon this conclusion, and had many merry meetings together: one night above the rest, when Frederigo was appointed to suppe with Monna Tessa, who had made ready two fat Capons, drest in most dainty and delicate manner: it fell out so unfortunately, that John (whose Kue was not to come that night) came thither very late, yet before Frederigo, wherewith she being not a little offended, gave John a slight supper, of Lard, Bacon, and such like coarse provision, because the other was kept for a better guest. In the meane time, and while John was at supper, the Maide (by her Mistresses direction) had conveighed the two Capons, with boyled Eggs, Bread and a

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I

Bottle of Wine (all folded up in a faire cleane table cloth) into her Garden, that had a passage to it, without entering into the house, and where shee had divers times supt with Frederigo. She further willed the Maide, to set all those things under a Peach tree, which adjoynd to the fields side: but, so angry she was at her husbands unexpected comming, that shee forgot to bid her tarrie there, till Frederigoes comming, and to tell him of Johns being there: as also, to take what he found prepared readie for his Supper.

John and she being gone to bed together, and the Maide likewise, it was not long after, before Frederigo came, and knocking once softly at the doore, which was very neere to their lodging Chamber, John heard the noise, and so did his wife. But to the end, that John might not have the least scruple of suspition, she seemed to be fast asleepe; and Frederigo pausing a while, according to the order directed, knockt againe the second time. John wondering thereat very much, jogd his wife a litle, and saide to her: Tessa, hearest thou nothing? Methinkes one knocketh at our doore. Monna Tessa, who was better acquainted with the knocke, then plaine honest meaning John was, dissembling as if shee awaked out of a drowsie dreame, saide: Alas Husband, dost thou know what this is? In the name of our blessed Ladie, be not affraid, this is but the Spirit which haunts our Countrey houses, whereof I have often told thee, and it hath many times much dismayed me, living heere alone without thy comfort. Nay, such hath bin my feare, that in divers nights past, so soone as I heard the knockes: I was feigne to hide my selfe in the bedde over-head and eares (as we usually say) never daring to be so bold, as to looke out, untill it was broad open day. Arise good wife (quoth John) and if it be such a Spirit of the Countrey, as thou talkest of, never be affraid; for before we went to bed, I said the Telucis, the Intemerata, with many other good prayers beside. Moreover, I made the signe of the Crosse at every corner of our bed, in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, so that no doubt

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I

at all needs to be made, of any power it can have to hurt or touch us.

Monna Tessa, because (perhaps) Frederigo might receive some other suspicion, and so enter into distaste of her by anger or offence: determined to arise indeede, and to let him covertly understand, that John was there, and therefore saide to her husband. Beleeve me John, thy counsell is good, and every one of thy words hath wisdom in it: but I hold it best for our owne safety, thou being heere; that wee should conjure him quite away, to the end he may never more haunt our house. Conjure him Wife? Quoth John, By what meanes? and how? Bee patient good man (quoth Tessa) and I will enstruct thee. I have learned an excellent kinde of conjuration; for, the last weeke, when I went to procure the pardons at Fiesola, one of the holy recluse Nuns, who (indeede John) is my indeered Sister and Friend, and the most sanctimonius in life of them all; perceiving me to be troubled and terrified by Spirits; taught me a wholesome and holy prayer, and protested withall, that shee had often made experiment thereof, before she became a Recluse, and found it (alwayes) a present helpe to her. Yet never durst I adventure to essay it, living heere by my selfe all alone: but honest John, seeing thou art heere with me, we will go both together, and conjure this Spirit. John replied, that he was very willing; and being both up, they went fayre and softly to the doore, where Frederigo stooode still without, and was growne somewhat suspitious of his long attendance.

When they were come to the doore, Monna Tessa said to John: Thou must cough and spet, at such time as I shall bid thee. Well (quoth John) I will not faile you. Immediately she beganne her prayer in this manner.

Spirit, that walkst thus in the night,
Poore Countrey people to affright:
Thou hast mistane thy marke and ayme,
The head stood right, but John home came,
And therefore thou must packe away,
For I have nothing else to say:

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NOVELL

I

But to my Garden get the gone,
Under the Peach-tree stands alone,
There shalt thou finde two Capons drest,
And Egges laide in mine owne Hennes nest,
Bread, and a Bottle of good Wine,
All wrapt up in a cloath most fine.
Is not this good Goblins fare?
Packer and say you have your share;
Not doing harme to John or me,
Who this night keepes me companie.

No sooner had she ended her devoute conjuring prayer, but she saide to her husband: Now John, cough and spet: which John accordingly did. And Frederigo, being all this while without, hearing her witty conjuration of a Spirit, which he himselfe was supposed to be, being ridde of his former jealous suspition: in the middst of all his melancholy, could very hardly refraine from laughing, the jest appeared so pleasing to him: But when John cought and spet, softly he said to himselfe: When next thou spetst, spet out all thy teeth.

The woman having three severall times conjured the Spirite, in such manner as you have already heard; returned to bed againe with her husband: and Frederigo, who came as perswaded to sup with her, being supperlesse all this while; directed by the words of Monna Tessa in hir praier, went into the Garden. At the foot of the Peach-tree, there he found the linnen cloth, with the two hot Capons, Bread, Egges, and a Bottle of Wine in it, all which he carried away with him, and went to Supper at better leysure. Oftentimes afterward, upon other meetings of Frederigo and she together, they laughed heartily at her enchantment, and the honest beleefe of silly John.

I cannot deny, but that some do affirme, that the Woman had turned the face of the Asses head towards Fiesola, and a Country Travailer passing by the Vine, having a long piked staffe on his necke: the staffe (by chance) touched the head, and made it turne divers times about, and in the end faced Florence, which being the cal for Frederigoes

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NOVELL comming, by this meanes he was disappointed. In like
I manner some say, that Monna Tessaes prayer for conjuring
the Spirit, was in this order.

Spirit, Spirit, go thy way,
And come againe some other day.
It was not I that turnd the head,
But some other. In our Bed
Are John and I : Go from our dore,
And see thou trouble us no more.

So that Frederigo departed thence, both with the losse of his labour and supper. But a neighbour of mine, who is a woman of good yeares, told me, that both the one and other were true, as she her selfe heard, when she was a little Girle. And concerning the latter accident, it was not to John of Lorrayne, but to another, named John de Nello, that dwelt at S. Peters Gate, and of the same profession as John of Lorrayne was. Wherefore (faire Ladies) it remaineth in your owne choice, to entertain which of the two prayers you please, or both together if you will : for they are of extraordinary vertue in such strange occurrences, as you have heeretofore heard, and (upon doubt) may prove by experience. It shall not therefore be amisse for you, to learne them both by hart, for (peradventure) they may stand you in good sted, if ever you chance to have the like occasion.

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NOVELL

II

Peronella hid a yong man her friend and Lover, under a great brewing Fat, upon the sodaine returning home of her Husband; who told her, that hee had solde the saide Fat, and brought him that bought it, to carry it away. Peronella replied, that shee had formerly solde it unto another, who was now underneath it, to see whether it were whole and sound, or no. Whereupon, he being come forth from under it; she caused her Husband to make it neate and cleane, and so the last buyer carried it away.

THE SECOND NOVELL

Wherein is declared, what hard and narrow shifts and distresses, such as bee seriously linked in Love, are many times enforced to undergo: According as their owne wit, and capacitie of their surprizers, drive them to in extremities.

NOT without much laughter and good liking, was the Tale of Madame Æmilia listened unto, and both the prayers commended to be sound and soveraigne: but it being ended, the King commaunded Philostratus, that hee should follow next in order, whereupon thus he began.

Deare Ladies, the deceites used by men towards your sexe, but especially Husbands, have bene so great and many, as when it hath sometime happened, or yet may, that husbands are requited in the self-same kinde: you need not finde fault at any such accident, either by knowledge thereof afterward, or hearing the same reported by

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any one; but rather you should referre it to generall publication, to the end, that immodest men may know, and finde it for trueth, that if they have apprehension and capacity; women are therein not a jote inferiour to them. Which cannot but redound to your great benefite, because, when any one knoweth, that another is as cunning and subtile as himselfe; he will not be so rashly adventurous in deceite. And who maketh any doubt, that if those sleights and trickes, whereof this dayes argument may give us occasion to speake, should afterwarde be put in execution by men: would it not minister just reason, of punishing themselves for beguiling you, knowing, that (if you please) you have the like abilitie in your owne power? Mine intent therefore is to tell you, what a woman (though but of meane qualitie) did to her husband, upon a sodaine, and in a moment (as it were) for her owne safety.

Not long since, there lived in Naples, an honest meane man, who did take to Wife, a fayre and lustie young Woman, being named Peronella. He professing the Trade of a Mason, and shee Carding and Spinning, maintained themselves in a reasonable condition, abating and abounding as their Fortunes served. It came to passe, that a certayne young man, well observing the beauty and good parts of Peronella, became much addicted in affection towards her: and by his often and secret solicitations, which he found not to be unkindely entertayned; his successe proved answerable to his hope, no unindifferencie appearing in their purposes, but where her estate seemed weakest, his supplies made an addition of more strength.

Now, for their securer meeting, to stand cleare from all matter of scandal or detection, they concluded in this order between themselves. Lazaro, for so was Peronellaes Husband named, being an earely riser every morning, either to seeke for worke, or to effect it being undertaken: this amorous friend being therewith acquainted, and standing in some such convenient place, where hee could see Lazaroes departure from his house, and yet himselfe no way discerned; poore Lazaro was no sooner gone, but presently he enters

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the house, which stood in a verie solitarie street, called the Avorio. Many mornings had they thus met together, to their no meane delight and contentation, till one especiall morning among the rest, when Lazaro was gone forth to worke, and Striguario (so was the amorous young man named) visiting Peronella in the house: upon a verie urgent occasion, Lazaro returned backe againe, quite contrary to his former wont, keeping foorth all day, and never comming home till night.

Finding his doore to be fast lockt, and he having knockt softlie once or twice, he spake in this manner to himselfe. Fortune I thanke thee, for albeit thou hast made mee poore, yet thou hast bestowed a better blessing on me, in matching me with so good, honest, and loving a Wife. Behold, though I went early out of my house, her selfe hath risen in the cold to shut the doore, to prevent the entrance of theeves, or any other that might offend us. Peronella having heard what her husband sayde, and knowing the manner of his knocke, said fearfully to Striguario. Alas deare friend, what shall wee doe? I am little lesse then a dead Woman: For, Lazaro my Husband is come backe again, and I know not what to do or say. He never returned in this order before now, doubtlesse, hee saw when you entred the doore; and for the safety of your honour and mine: creepe under this brewing Fat, till I have opened the doore, to know the reason of his so soone returning.

Striguario made no delaying of the matter, but got himselfe closelie under the Fat, and Peronella opening the doore for her husbands enterance, with a frowning countenance, spake thus unto him. What meaneth this so early returning home againe this morning? It seemeth, thou intendest to do nothing to day, having brought backe thy tooles in thy hands? If such be thine intent, how shall we live? Where shal we have bread to fill our bellies? Dooest thou thinke, that I will suffer thee to pawne my gowne, and other poore garments, as heeretofore thou hast done? I that card and spinne both night and day, till I have worne the flesh from my fingers; yet all will hardly finde oyle to

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NOVELL II maintaine our Lampe. Husband, husband, there is not one neighbour dwelling by us, but makes a mockerie of me, and tels me plainly, that I may be ashamed to drudge and moyle as I do; wondering not a little, how I am able to endure it; and thou returnest home with thy hands in thy hose, as if thou hadst no worke at all to do this day.

Having thus spoken, she fell to weeping, and then thus began again. Poore wretched woman as I am, in an unfortunate houre was I borne, and in a much worse, when I was made thy Wife. I could have had a proper, handsome yong man; one, that would have maintained mee brave and gallantly: but, beast as I was, to forgoe my good, and cast my selfe away on such a beggar as thou art, and whom none wold have had, but such an Asse as I. Other women live at hearts ease, and in jollity, have their amorous friends and loving Paramours, yea, one, two, three at once, making their husbands looke like a Moone cressent, wheron they shine Sun-like, with amiable lookes, because they know not how to helpe it: when I (poore foole) live heere at home a miserable life, not daring once to dreame of such follies, an innocent soule, heartlesse and harmelesse.

Many times, sitting and sighing to my selfe: Lord, thinke I, of what mettall am I made? Why should not I have a Friend in a corner, aswell as others have? I am flesh and blood, as they are, not made of brasse or iron, and therefore subject to womens frailty. I would thou shouldest know it husband, and I tell it thee in good earnest; That if I would doe ill, I could quickly finde a friend at a neede. Gallants there are good store, who (of my knowledge) love me dearly, and have made me very large and liberall promises, of Golde, Silver, Jewels, and gay Garments, if I would extend them the least favour. But my heart will not suffer me, I never was the daughter of such a mother, as had so much as a thought of such matters: no, I thanke our blessed Ladie, and S. Friswid for it: and yet thou returnest home againe, when thou shouldst be at Worke.

Lazaro, who stooode all this while like a well-beleeving Logger-head, demurely thus answered. Alas good Wife! I

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pray you bee not so angry, I never had so much as an ill thought of you, but know wel enough what you are, and have made good prooffe thereof this morning. Understand therefore patiently (sweet Wife) that I went forth to my work as dayly I use to do, little dreaming (as I thinke you doe not) that it had bene Holy-day. Wife, this is the Feast day of Saint Galeone; whereon we may in no wise worke, and this is the reason of my so soone returning. Nevertheless (dear Wife) I was not carelesse of our Houshold provision: For, though we worke not, yet we must have foode, which I have provided for more then a moneth. Wife, I remembred the brewing Fat, whereof we have little or no use at all, but rather it is a trouble to the house, then otherwise. I met with an honest Friend, who stayeth without at the doore, to him I have sold the Fat for ten Gigliatoes, and he tarrieth to take it away with him.

How Husband? replied Peronella, Why now I am worse offended then before. Thou that art a man, walkest every where, and shouldst be experienced in worldly affaires: wouldst thou bee so simple, as to sell such a brewing Fat for ten Gigliatoes? Why, I that am a poore ignorant woman, a house-Dove, sildome going out of my doore: have sold it already for twelve Gigliatoes, to a very honest man, who (even a little before thy comming home) came to me, we agreed on the bargaine, and he is now underneath the Fat, to see whether it be sound or no. When credulous Lazaro heard this, he was better contented then ever, and went to him that taried at the doore, saying. Good man, you may goe your way, for, whereas you offered me but ten Gigliatoes for the Fat, my loving wife hath sold it for twelve, and I must maintaine what shee hath done: so the man departed, and the variance ended.

Peronella then saide to her husband. Seeing thou art come home so luckily, helpe me to lift up the Fat, that the man may come foorth, and then you two end the bargaine together. Striguario, who thogh he was mewed up under the tubbe, had his eares open enough; and hearing the witty excuse of Peronella, tooke himselfe free from future feare:

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II

and being come from under the Fat, pretending also, as if he had herd nothing, nor saw Lazaro, looking round about him, said. Where is this good woman? Lazaro stepping forth boldly like a man, replyed: Heere am I, what would you have Sir? Thou? quoth Striguario, what art thou? I ask for the good wife, with whom I made my match for the Fat. Honest Gentleman (answered Lazaro) I am that honest Womans Husband, for lacke of a better, and I will maintaine whatsoever my Wife hath done.

I crie you mercie Sir, replyed Striguario, I bargained with your Wife for this brewing Fat, which I finde to be whole and sound: only it is uncleane within, hard crusted with some dry soile upon it, which I know not well how to get off, if you will be the meanes of making it cleane, I have the money heere ready for it. For that Sir (quoth Peronella) take you no care, although no match at all had beene made, what serves my Husband for, but to make it cleane? Yes forsooth Sir, answered sily Lazaro, you shall have it neate and cleane before you pay the mony.

So, stripping himselfe into his shirt, lighting a Candle, and taking tooles fit for the purpose; the Fat was whelmed over him, and he being within it, wrought untill he sweated, with scraping and scrubbing. So that these poore Lovers, what they could not accomplish as they wold, necessity enforced them to performe as they might. And Peronella, looking in at the vent-hole, where the Liquor runneth forth for the meshing; seemed to instruct her husband in the businesse, as espying those parts where the Fat was fowlest, saying: There, there Lazaro, tickle it there, the Gentleman payes well for it, and is worthy to have it: but see thou do thy selfe no harme good Husband. I warrant thee Wife, answered Lazaro, hurt not your selfe with leaning your stomacke on the Fat, and leave the cleansing of it to me. To be breefe, the Brewing Fat was neatly cleansed, Peronella and Striguario both well pleased, the money paid, and honest meaning Lazaro not discontented.

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NOVELL
III

Friar Reynard, falling in love with a Gentlewoman, Wife to a man of good account; found the meanes to become her Gossip. Afterward, he being conferring closely with her in her Chamber, and her Husband coming sodainly thither: she made him beleewe, that he came thither for no other end; but to cure his Godsonne by a charme, of a dangerous disease which he had by Wormes.

THE THIRD NOVELL

Serving as a friendly advertisement to married women, that Monks, Friars, and Priests may be none of their Gossips, in regard of unavoydable perilles ensuing thereby.

PHILOSTRATUS told not this Tale so covertly, concerning Lazaros simplicity, and Peronellaes witty policy; but the Ladies found a knot in the rush, and laughed not a little, at his quaint manner of discoursing it. But upon the conclusion, the King looking upon Madam Eliza, willed her to succeede next, which as willingly she granted, and thus began. Pleasant Ladies, the charme or conjuration wherwith Madam Æmillia laid her night-walking Spirit, maketh me remember a Novell of another enchantment; which although it carrieth not commendation equall to the other, yet I intend to report it, because it suteth with our present purpose, and I cannot sodainly be furnisht with another, answerable thereto in nature.

You are to understand then, that there lived in Siena, a proper yong man, of good birth and well friended, being named Reynard. Earnestly he affected his neere dwelling neighbour, a beautifull Gentlewoman, and wife to a man of

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NOVELL III

good esteeme : of whom hee grew halfe perswaded, that if he could (without suspition) compasse private conference with her, he should reach the height of his amorous desires. Yet seeing no likely meanes wherewith to further his hope, and shee being great with childe, he resolved to become a God-father to the childe, at such time as it should be brought to Christening. And being inwardly acquainted with her Husband, who was named Credulano; such familiar intercourses passed betweene them, both of Reynards kinde offer, and Credulanoes as courteous acceptance, that hee was set downe for a Gossippe.

Reynard being thus embraced for Madam Agnesiaes Gossip, and this proving the onely colourable meanes, for his safer permission of speech with her, to let her now understand by word of mouth, what long before she collected by his lookes and behaviour : it fell out no way beneficiall to him, albeit Agnesia seemed not nice or scrupulous in hearing, yet she had a more precious care of her honor. It came to passe, within a while after (whether by seeing his labour vainly spent, or some other urgent occasion moving him thereto, I know not) Reynard would needs enter into Religion, and whatsoever strictnesse or austeritie hee found to be in that kinde of life, yet he determined to persevere therein, whether it were for his good or ill. And although within a short space, after he was thus become a Religious Monke, hee seemed to forget the former love which he bare to his gossip Agnesia, and divers other enormous vanities beside : yet let me tell you, successe of time tutord him in them againe; and, without any respect to his poore holy habite, but rather in contempt thereof (as it were) he tooke an especiall delight, in wearing garments of much richer esteeme, yet favoured by the same Monasticall profession, appearing (in all respects) like a Court-Minion or Favourite, of a sprightly and Poeticall disposition, for composing Verses, Sonnets, and Canzons, singing them to sundry excellent instruments, and yet not greatly curious of his company, so they were some of the best, and Madame Agnesia one, his former Gossip.

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III

But why doe I trouble my selfe, in talking thus of our so lately converted Friar, holy Father Reynard, when they of longer standing, and reputed meerely for Saints in life, are rather much more vile then hee? Such is the wretched condition of this world, that they shame not (fat, foggie, and nastie Abbey-lubbers) to shew how full-fedde they live in their Cloysters, with cherry cheekes, and smooth shining lookes, gay and gaudy garments, far from the least expression of humility, not walking in the streets like Doves: but high-crested like Cockes, with well cramd gorges. Nay, which is worse, if you did but see their Chambers furnished with Gally-pots of Electuaries, precious Unguents, Apothecary Boxes, filled with various Confections, Conserves, excellent Perfumes, and other goodly Glasses of artificiall Oyles and Waters: beside Rundlets and small Barrels full of Greeke Wine, Muscatella, Lachrime Christi, and other such like most precious Wines, so that (to such as see them) they seeme not to bee Chambers of Religious men; but rather Apothecaries Shoppes, or appertaining to Druggists, Grocers, or Perfumers.

It is no disgrace to them to be Gowty; because when other men know it not, they alledge, that strict fasting, feeding on grosse meates (though never so little,) continuall studying, and such like restraints from the bodies freer exercise, maketh them subject to many infirmities. And yet, when any one of them chanceth to fall sicke, the Physitian must minister no such counsell to them, as Chastity, Abstinence from voluptuous meats, Discipline of the body, or any of those matters appertaining to a modest religious life. For, concerning the plaine, vulgar, and Plebeian people, these holy Fathers are perswaded, that they know nothing really belonging to a sanctimonious life; as long watching, praying, discipline and fasting, which (in themselves) are not able, to make men look leane, wretched, and pale. Because Saint Dominicke, Saint Fraunces, and divers other holy Saints beside, observed the selvesame religious orders and constitutions, as now their carefull successors do. Moreover, in example of those fore-named Saints, who went

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wel cloathed, though they had not three Garments for one, nor made of the finest Woollen excellent cloath: but rather of the very coarsest of all other, and of the common ordinary colour, to expell cold onely, but not to appear brave or gallant, deceyving thereby infinite simple credulous soules, whose purses (neverthelesse) are their best pay-masters.

But leave we this, and returne wee backe to vertuous Fryar Reynard, who falling againe to his former appetites; became an often visitant of his Gossip Agnesia, and now hee had learned such a blushlesse kinde of boldnesse; that he durst be more instant with her (concerning his privie sute) then ever formerly he had bin, yea, even to sollicite the enjoying of his immodest desires. The good Gentlewoman, seeing her selfe so importunately pursued, and Friar Reynard appearing now (perhappes) of sweeter and more delicate complexion, then at his entrance into Religion: at a set time of his secret communing with her; she answered him in as apt tearmes, as they use to do, who are not greatly squeamish, in granting matters demanded of them.

Why how now Friar Reynard? quoth shee, Doe God-fathers use to move such questions? Whereto the Friar thus replied. Madam, when I have laide off this holy habite (which is a matter very easie for mee to do) I shall seeme in your eye, in all respects made like another man, quite from the course of any Religious life. Agnesia, biting the lip with a prety smile, said; O my faire Starres! You will never bee so unfriendly to me. What? You being my Gossip, would you have me consent unto such a sinne? Our blessed Lady shield mee, for my ghostly Father hath often told me, that it is utterly unpardonable: but if it were, I feare too much confiding on mine owne strength. Gossip, Gossip, answered the Friar, you speake like a Foole, and feare (in this case) is wholly frivolous, especially, when the motions mooved by such an one as my selfe, who (upon repentance) can grant you pardon and indulgence presently. But I pray you let mee aske you one question, Who is the nearest Kinsman to your Son; either I, that stood at the Font for his Baptisme, or your Husband

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that begot him? The Lady made answer, that it was her Husband. You say very true Gossip, replied the Friar, and yet notwithstanding, doth not your Husband (both at boord and bed) enjoy the sweet benefit of your company? Yes, said the Lady, why shold he not? Then Lady (quoth Reynard) I, who am not so neere a Kinsman to your Sonne, as your Husband is, why may ye not afford mee the like favour, as you do him? Agnesia, who was no Logitian, and therefore could not stand on any curious answer, especially being so cunningly moved; beleaved, or rather made shew of beleaving, that the Godfather said nothing but truth, and thus answered. What woman is she (Gossip) that knoweth how to answer your strange speeches? And, how it came to passe, I know not, but such an agreement passed betweene them, that, for once onely (so it might not infringe the league of Gossip-ship, but that title to countenance their further intent) such a favour should be afforded, so it might stand cleare from suspition.

An especiall time being appointed, when this amorous Combate should be fought in loves field, Friar Reynard came to his Gossips house, where none being present to hinder his purpose, but onely the Nurse which attended on the child, who was an indifferent faire and proper woman: his holy brother that came thither in his company (because Friars were not allowed to walke alone) was sent aside with her into the Pigeon loft, to enstruct her in a new kinde of Pater noster, lately devised in their holy Convent. In the meane while, as Friar Reynard and Agnesia were entring into hir chamber, she leading her little son by the hand, and making fast the doore for their better safety: the Friar laide by his holie habit, Cowle, Hood, Booke, and Beads, to bee (in all respects) as other men were. No sooner were they thus entred the Chamber, but her husband Credulano, being come into the house, and unseen of any, staid not till he was at the Chamber doore, where hee knockt, and called for his Wife.

She hearing his voice: Alas Gossip (quoth she) what shall I do? My Husband knocketh at the doore, and now

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NOVELL III he will perceive the occasion of our so familiar acquaintance. Reynard being stript into his Trusse and strait Strouses, began to tremble and quake exceedingly. I heare your Husbands tongue Gossip, said he, and seeing no harme as yet hath bin done, if I had but my garments on againe; wee would have one excuse or other to serve the turne, but till then you may not open the doore. As womens wits are sildome gadding abroad, when any necessitie concerneth them at home: even so Agnesia, being sodainly provided of an invention, both how to speake and carry her selfe in this extremitie, saide to the Friar. Get on your garments quickly, and when you are cloathed, take your little God-son in your armes, and listning wel what I shall say, shape your answeres according to my words, and then refer the matter to me. Credulano had scarsely ended his knocking, but Agnesia stepping to the doore said: Husband, I come to you. So she opened the doore, and (going forth to him) with a chearefull countenance thus spake. Beleeve me Husband, you could not have come in a more happy time, for our yong Son was sudainly extreemly sicke, and (as good Fortune would have it) our loving Gossip Reynard chanced to come in; and questionlesse, but by his good prayers and other religious paynes, we had utterly lost our childe, for he had no life left in him.

Credulano, being as credulous as his name imported, seemed ready to swoune with sodaine conceit: Alas good wife (quoth he) how hapned this? Sit downe sweet Husband said she, and I wil tell you al. Our child was sodainly taken with a swouning, wherein I being unskilful, did verily suppose him to be dead, not knowing what to doe, or say. By good hap, our Gossip Reynard came in, and taking the childe up in his armes, said to me. Gossip, this is nothing else but Wormes in the bellie of the childe, which ascending to the heart, must needs kill the child, without all question to the contrary. But be of good comfort Gossip, and feare not, for I can charme them in such sort, that they shall all die, and before I depart hence,

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you shall see your Son as healthfull as ever. And because the maner of this charme is of such nature, that it required prayer and exorcising in two places at once: Nurse went up with his Holye Brother into our Pigeon loft, to exercise their devotion there, while we did the like heere. For none but the mother of the childe must bee present at such a mystery, nor any enter to hinder the operation of the charme; which was the reason of making fast the Chamber doore. You shall see Husband anon the Childe, which is indifferently recovered in his armes, and if Nurse and his holy Brother were returned from theyr meditations; he saith, that the charme would then be fully effected: for the child beginneth to looke chearefull and merry.

So deerely did Credulano love the childe, that hee verily beleaved, what his Wife had saide, never misdoubting any other treachery: and, lifting up his eyes, with a vehement sigh, said. Wife, may not I goe in and take the child into my armes? Oh no, not yet good husband (quoth she) in any case, least you should overthrow all that is done. Stay but a little while, I will go in againe, and if all bee well, then will I call you. In went Agnesia againe, making the doore fast after her, the Fryar having heard all the passed speeches, by this time he was fitted with his habite, and taking the childe in his armes, he said to Agnesia. Gossip methought I heard your Husbands voice, is hee at your Chamber doore? Yes Gossip Reynard (quoth Credulano without, while Agnesia opened the doore, and admitted him entrance) indeede it is I. Come in Sir, I pray you, replied the Friar, and heere receive your childe of mee, who was in great danger, of your ever seeing him any more alive. But you must take order, to make an Image of waxe, agreeing with the stature of the childe, to be placed on the Altar before the Image of S. Frances, by whose merites the childe is thus restored to health.

The childe, beholding his Father, made signes of coming to him, rejoycing merrily, as yong infants use to do, and Credulano clasping him in his armes, wept with conceite of joy, kissing him infinitely, and heartily thanking

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his Gossip Reynard, for the recovery of his God-son. The Friars brotherly Companion, who had given sufficient enstructions to the Nurse, and a small purse full of Sisters white thred, which a Nunne (after shrift) had bestowed on him, upon the husbands admittance into the Chamber (which they easily heard) came in also to them, and seeing all in very good tearmes, they holpe to make a joyfull conclusion, the Brother saying to Friar Reynard: Brother, I have finished all those foure Jaculatory prayers, which you commanded me.

Brother, answered Reynard, you have a better breath then I, and your successe hath prooved happier then mine, for before the arrivall of my Gossip Credulano, I could accomplish but two Jaculatory prayers onely. But it appeareth, that we have both prevailed in our devout desires, because the childe is perfectly cured. Credulano calling for Wine and good cheare, feasted both the Friars very jocondly, and then conducting them forth of his house, without any further intermission, caused the childs Image of waxe to be made, and sent it to be placed on the Altar of Saint Frances, among many other the like oblations.

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IV

Tofano in the night season, did locke his wife out of his house, and shee not prevailing to get entrance againe, by all the entreaties she could possiblief use: made him beleewe that she had throwne her selfe into a Well, by casting a great stone into the same Well. Tofano hearing the fall of the stone into the Well, and being perswaded that it was his Wife indeed; came forth of his house, and ran to the Welles side. In the meane while, his wife gotte into the house, made fast the doore against her Husband, and gave him many reproachfull speeches.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

Wherein is manifested, that the malice and subtilty of a Woman, surpasseth all the Art or Wit in man.

SO soone as the King perceyved, that the Novell reported by Madame Eliza was finished: hee turned himselfe to Madame Lauretta, and told her it was his pleasure, that she should now begin the next, whereto she yeelded in this manner. O Love: What, and how many are thy prevailing forces? How straunge are thy foresights? And how admirable thine attempts? Where is, or ever was the Philosopher or Artist, that could enstruct the wiles, escapes, preventions, and demonstrations, which sodainly thou teachest such, as are thy apt and understanding Schollers indeede? Certaine it is, that the documents and eruditions of all other whatsoever, are weak, or of no worth, in respect of thine: as hath notably appeared, by the remonstrances already past, and whereto (worthy Ladies)

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL I wil adde another of a simple woman, who taught her
IV husband such a lesson, as shee never learned of any, but
Love himselfe.

There dwelt sometime in Arezzo (which is a faire Village of Tuscany) a rich man, named Tofano, who enjoyed in marriage a young beautifull woman, called Cheta: of whom (without any occasion given, or reason knowne to himselfe) he became exceeding jealous. Which his wife perceyving, she grew much offended thereat, and tooke it in great scorne, that she should be servile to so vile and slavish a condition. Oftentimes, she demanded of him, from whence this jealousie in him received originall, he having never seene or heard of any; he could make her no other answer, but what his owne bad humour suggested, and drove him every day (almost) to deaths doore, by feare of that which no way needed. But, whether as a just scourge for this his grosse folly, or a secret decree, ordained to him by Fortune and the Fates, I am not able to distinguish: It came so to passe, that a young Gallant made meanes to enjoy her favour, and she was so discreetly wise in judging of his worthinesse; that affection passed so farre mutually betweene them, as nothing wanted, but effects to answere words, suited with time and place convenient, for which order was taken as best they might, yet to stand free from all suspition.

Among many other evill conditions, very frequent and familiar in her husband Tofano; he tooke a great delight in drinking, which not only he held to be a commendable quality, but was alwaies so often solicited thereto: that Cheta her selfe began to like and allow it in him, feeding his humor so effectually, with quaffing and carowsing, that (at any time when she listed) she could make him bowsie beyonde all measure: and leaving him sleeping in this drunkennesse, would alwayes get her selfe to bed. By helpe heereof, she compassed the first familiarity with her friend, yea, divers times after, as occasion served: and so confidently did she builde on her husbands drunkennesse, that not onely shee adventured to bring her friend home

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into her owne house; but also would as often go to his, which was some-what neere at hand, and abide with him there, the most part of the night season.

While Cheta thus continued on these amorous courses, it fortun'd, that her slye suspicious husband, beganne to perceive, that though shee drunke very much with him, yea, untill he was quite spent and gone: yet she remained fresh and sober still, and therby imagined strange matters, that he being fast asleepe, his wife then tooke advantage of his drowsinesse, and might—and so forth. Beeing desirous to make experience of this his distrust, hee returned home at night (not having drunke any thing all the whole day) dissembling both by his words and behaviour, as if he were notoriously drunke indeede. Which his Wife constantly beleaving, saide to her selfe: That hee had now more neede of sleepe, then drinke; getting him immediately into his warme bed; and then going downe the staires againe, softly went out of doores unto her Friends house, as formerly she had used to do, and there shee remained untill midnight.

Tofano perceiving that his Wife came not to bed, and imagining to have heard his doore both open and shut: arose out of his bed, and calling his Wife Cheta divers times, without any answere returned: hee went downe the staires, and finding the doore but closed too, made it fast and sure on the inside, and then got him up to the window, to watch the returning home of his wife, from whence shee came, and then to make her conditions apparantly knowne. So long there he stay'd, till at the last she returned indeede, and finding the doore so surely shut, shee was exceeding sorrowful, essaying how she might get it open by strength: which when Tofano had long suffered her in vaine to approove, thus hee spake to her. Cheta, Cheta, all thy labour is meerely lost, because heere is no entrance allowed for thee; therefore return to the place from whence thou camest, that all thy friends may judge of thy behaviour, and know what a night-walker thou art become.

The woman hearing this displeasing language, began to use all humble entreaties, desiring him (for charities sake)

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to open the doore and admit her entrance, because she had not bin in any such place, as his jelous suspition might suggest to him: but onely to visit a weak and sickly neighbour, the nights being long, she not (as yet) capeable of sleepe, nor willing to sit alone in the house. But all her perswasions served to no purpose, he was so settled in his owne opinion, that all the Town should now see her nightly gading, which before was not so much as suspected. Cheta seeing, that faire meanes would not prevaile, shee entred into roughe speeches and threatnings, saying: If thou wilt not open the doore and let me come in, I will so shame thee, as never base man was. As how I pray thee? answered Tofano, what canst thou do to me?

The woman, whom love had inspired with sprightly counsell, ingeniously enstructing her what to do in this distresse, stearnly thus replied. Before I will suffer any such shame as thou intendest towards mee, I will drowne my selfe heere in this Well before our doore, where being found dead, and thy villanous jealousie so apparantly knowne, beside thy more then beastly drunkennesse: all the neighbours will constantly beleewe, that thou didst first strangle me in the house, and afterwarde threw me into this Well. So either thou must flie upon the supposed offence, or lose all thy goodes by banishment, or (which is much more fitting for thee) have thy head smitten off, as a wilfull murtherer of thy wife; for all will judge it to be no otherwise. All which wordes, mooved not Tofano a jot from his obstinat determination: but he still persisting therin, thus she spake. I neither can nor will longer endure this base Villanie of thine: to the mercy of heaven I commit my soul, and stand there my wheele, a witnesse against so hard-hearted a murtherer.

No sooner had she thus spoke, but the night being so extreemly dark, as they could not discerne one another; Cheta went to the Well, where finding a verie great stone, which lay loose upon the brim of the Well, even as if it had beene layde there on purpose, shee cried out aloud, saying. Forgive me faire heavens, and so threw the stone

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IV

downe into the Well. The night being very still and silent, the fal of the great stone made such a dreadfull noise in the Well; that he hearing it at the Windowe, thought verily she had drowned her selfe indeede. Where-upon, running downe hastily, and taking a Bucket fastened to a strong Cord: he left the doore wide open, intending speedily to helpe her. But she standing close at the doores entrance, before he could get to the Wels side; she was within the house, softly made the doore fast on the inside, and then went up to the Window, where Tofano before had stood talking to her.

While he was thus dragging with his Bucket in the Well, crying and calling Cheta, take hold good Cheta, and save thy life: she stood laughing in the Window, saying. Water should bee put into Wine before a man drinckes it, and not when he hath drunke too much already. Tofano hearing his Wife thus to flout him out of his Window, went back to the doore, and finding it made fast against him: he willed hir to grant him entrance. But she, forgetting all gentle Language, which formerly she had used to him: in meere mockery and derision (yet intermixed with some sighes and teares, which women are saide to have at command) out aloud (because the Neighbours should heare her) thus she replied.

Beastly drunken Knave as thou art, this night thou shalt not come within these doores, I am no longer able to endure thy base behaviour, it is more then high time, that thy course of life should bee publicly known, and at what drunken houres thou returnest home to thy house. Tofano, being a man of very impatient Nature, was as bitter unto her in words on the other side, which the Neighbours about them (both men and Women) hearing; looked forth of their Windowes, and demaunding a reason for this their disquietnesse, Cheta (seeming as if she wept) sayde.

Alas my good Neighbours, you see at what unfitting houres, this bad man comes home to his house, after hee hath lyen in a Taverne all day drunke, sleeping and snorting like a Swine. You are my honest witnesses, how long

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I have suffered this beastlinesse in him, yet neyther your good counsell, nor my too often loving admonitions, can worke that good which wee have expected. Wherefore, to try if shame can procure any amendment, I have shut him out of doores, until his drunken fit be over-past, and so he shall stand to coole his feet.

Tofano (but in very uncivill maner) told her being abroad that night, and how she had used him: But the Neighbours seeing her to be within the house, and beleev- ing her, rather then him, in regard of his too well knowne ill qualities; very sharply reproved him, gave him grosse speeches, pittying that any honest Woman should be so continually abused. Now my good Neighbours (quoth she) you see what manner of man he is. What would you thinke of me, if I should walk the streets thus in the night time, or be so late out of mine owne house, as this dayly Drunkard is? I was affraid least you would have given credit to his dissembling speeches, when he told you, that I was at the Welles side, and threw something into the Well: but that I know your better opinion of me, and how sildome I am to be seene out of doores, although he would induce your sharper judgement of me, and lay that shame upon me, wherein he hath sinned himselfe.

The Neighbours, both men and Women, were all very severely incensed against Tofano, condemning him for his great fault that night committed, and avouching his wife to be vertuous and honest. Within a little while, the noise passing from Neighbour to Neighbour, at the length it came to the eares of her Kindred, who forthwith resorted thither, and hearing how sharply the Neighbours reprehended Tofano: they tooke him, soundly bastanadoed him, and hardly left any bone of him unbruised. Afterward, they went into the house, tooke all such things thence as belonged to hir, taking hir also with them to their dwelling, and threatening Tofano with further infliction of punishment, both for his drunkennesse, and causlesse jealousy.

Tofano perceyving how curstly they had handled him,

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and what crooked meanes might further be used against him, in regard her Kindred and Friends were very mightie: thought it much better, patiently to suffer the wrong alreadie done him, then by obstinate contending to proceed further, and fare worse. He became a suter to her Kindred, that al might be forgotten and forgiven, in recompence whereof; he would not onely refraine from drunkennesse, but also, never more be jelous of his wife. This being faithfully promised, and Cheta reconciled to her Husband, all strife was ended, she enjoyed her friends favour, as occasion served, but yet with such discretion, as it was not noted. Thus the Coxcombe foole, was faine to purchase his peace, after a notorious wrong sustained, and further injuries to bee offered.

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NOVELL

V

A Jealous man, clouded with the habite of a Priest, became the Confessour to his owne Wife; who made him beleewe, that she was deeply in love with a Priest, which came every night, and lay with her. By meanes of which confession, while her jealous Husband watched the doore of his house; to surprize the Priest when he came: she that never meant to do amisse, had the company of a secret Friend, who came over the toppe of the house to visite her, while her foolish Husband kept the doore.

THE FIFT NOVELL

In just scorne and mockery of such jealous Husbands, that will be so idle headed upon no occasion. And yet when they have good reason for it, do least of all suspect any such injury.

MADAM LAURETTA having ended her Novell, and every one commended the Woman, for fitting Tofano in his kinde; and, as his jealousy and drunkennesse justly deserved: the King (to prevent all losse of time) turned to Madame Fiammetta, commaunding her to follow next: whereuppon, very graciously, shee beganne in this manner.

Noble Ladies, the precedent Novell delivered by Madame Lauretta, maketh me willing to speake of another jealous man; as being halfe perswaded, that whatsoever is done to them by their Wives, and especially upon no occasion given, they doe no more then well becommeth them. And if those grave heads, which were the first instituters of lawes, had diligently observed all things; I am of the

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minde, that they would have ordained no other penalty for ~~Women~~ than they appointed against such, as (in their owne defence) de offend any other. For jealous husbands, are meere insidiators of their Wives lives, and most diligent pursuers of their deaths, being lockt up in their houses all the Weeke long, imployed in nothing but domesticke drudging affayres: which makes them desirous of high Festivall dayes, to receive some litle comfort abroad, by an honest recreation or pastime, as Husbandmen in the fields, Artizans in our Citie, or Governours in our judicall Courtes; yea, or as our Lord himselfe, who rested the seaventh day from all his travailes. In like manner, it is so willed and ordained by the Lawes, as well divine as humane, which have regard to the glory of God, and for the common good of every one; making distinction betweene those dayes appointed for labour, and the other determined for rest. Whereto jealous persons (in no case) will give consent, but all those dayes (which for other women are pleasing and delightfull) unto such, over whom they command, are most irksome, sadde and sorrowful, because then they are lockt up, and very strictly restrained. And if question wer urged, how many good women do live and consume away in this torturing hel of affliction: I can make no other answere, but such as feele it, are best able to discover it. Wherefore to conclude the prohome to my present purpose, let none be over rash in condemning women: for what they do to their husbands, being jealous without occasion; but rather commend their wit and providence.

Somtime (faire Ladies) there lived in Arimino, a Merchant, very rich in wealth and worldly possessions, who having a beautifull Gentlewoman to his wife, he became extremly jelous of her. And he had no other reason for this foolish conceit; but, like as he loved hir dearly, and found her to be very absolutely faire: even so he imagined, that although she devised by her best meanes to give him content; yet others would grow enamored of her, because she appeared so amiable to al. In which

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respect, time might tutor her to affect somele habite of a
himselfe: the onely common argument of every ^{s. 10} ~~man~~ ^{man}, being weake and shallow in his owne understanding.
This jelous humor increasing in him more and more, he
kept her in such narrow restraint: that many persons
condemned to death, have enjoyed larger libertie in their
imprisonment. For, she might not bee present at Feasts,
Weddings, nor goe to Church, or so much as to be seen at
her doore: Nay, she durst not stand in her Window, nor
looke out of her house, for any occasion whatsoever. By
means whereof, life seemed most tedious and offensive to
her, and she supported it the more impatiently, because
shee knew her selfe not any way faulty.

Seeing her husband still persist in this shamefull course
towards her; she studied, how she might best comfort her
selfe in this desolate case: by devising some one meane or
other (if any at all were to bee founde) wherby he might
be requited in his kind, and wear that badge of shame
whereof he was now but onely affraid. And because she
could not gain so small a permission, as to be seene at any
window, where (happily) she might have observed some one
passing by in the street, discerning a litle parcell of her
love: she remembred at length, that, in the next house to
her Husbands (they both joyning close together) there
dwelt a comely yong proper Gentleman, whose perfections
carried correspondencie with her desires. She also con-
sidered with her selfe, that if there were any partition wall;
such a chinke or cranny might easily be made therein, by
which (at one time or other) she should gaine a sight of
the young Gentleman, and finde an houre so fitting, as to
conferre with him, and bestow her lovely favour on him, if
he pleased to accept it. If successe (in this case) proved
answerable to her hope, then thus she resolved to outrun
the rest of her wearisome dayes, except the frensie of
jealousie did finish her husbands loathed life before.

Walking from one roome to another, thorough every part
of the house; and no wall escaping without diligent
surveying; on a day, when her Husband was absent from

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minde, that ~~they~~ ^{she} ~~was~~ ^{was} in a corner very secret, an indifferent ~~Woman~~ ^{Woman} th^{rough} the Wall; which though it yeilded no full view on the other side, yet she plainly perceived it to be an handsome Chamber, and grew more then halfe perswaded, that either it might be the Chamber of Philippo (for so was the neighbouring yong Gentleman named) or else a passage guiding thereto. A Chambermaid of hers, who compassioned her case very much; made such observance, by her Mistresses direction, that she found it to be Philippoes bed Chamber, and where alwayes he used to lodge alone. By often visiting this rift or chinke in the Wall, especially when the Gentleman was there; and by throwing in little stones, flowers, and such like things, which fell still in his way as he walked: so farre she prevailed, that he stepping to the chinke, to know from whence they came; shee called softly to him, who knowing her voyce, there they had such private conference together, as was not any way displeasing to either. So that the chinke being made a little larger; yet so, as it could not be easily discerned: their mouthes might meete with kisses together, and their hands folded each in other; but nothing else to be performed, for continuall feare of her jealous husband.

Now the Feast of Christmasse drawing neere, the Gentlewoman said to her Husband; that, if it stood with his liking: she would do such duty as fitted with so solemne a time, by going earely in a morning unto Church, there to be confessed, and receive her Saviour, as other Christians did. How now? replied the jealous Asse, what sinnes have you committed, that should neede confession? How Husband? quoth she, what do you thinke me to be a Saint? Who knoweth not, I pray you, that I am as subject to sinne, as any other Woman living in the world? But my sins are not to be revealed to you, because you are no Priest. These words enflamed his jealousie more violently then before, and needes must he know what sinnes she had committed, and having resolved what to do in this case, made her answer: That hee was contented with her motion, alwaies provided, that she went

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to no other Church, then unto their owne Chappell, betimes in a morning; and their own Chaplaine to confesse her or some other Priest by him appointed, but not any other: and then she to returne home presently againe. She being a woman of acute apprehension, presently collected his whole intention: but seeming to take no knowledge thereof, replied, that she would not swerve from his direction.

When the appointed day was come, she arose very earely, and being prepared answerable to her owne liking, to the Chappell shee went as her Husband had appointed, where her jealous Husband (being much earlier risen then she) attended for her comming: having so ordred the matter with his Chaplaine, that he was cloathed in his Cowle, with a large Hood hanging over his eyes, that she should not know him, and so he went and sate downe in the Confessors place. Shee being entred into the Chappell, and calling for the Priest to heare her confession, he made her answer: that he could not intend it, but would bring her to another holy Brother, who was at better leysure then hee. So to her Husband he brought her, that seemed (in all respects) like the Confessor himselfe: save onely his Hood was not so closely veyled, but shee knew his beard, and said to her selfe. What a mad world is this, when jealousie can metamorphose an ordinary man into a Priest? But, let me alone with him, I meane to fit him with that which he looks for.

So, appearing to have no knowledge at all of him, downe she fell at his feete, and he had conveyed a few Cherry stones into his mouth, to trouble his speech from her knowledge; for, in all things els, he thoght himselfe to be sufficiently fitted for her. In the course of her confession, she declared, that she was married to a most wicked jealous Husband, and with whom she lead a very hatefull life. Neverthesse (quoth she) I am indifferently even with him, for I am beloved of an Holie Fryar, that every night commeth and lyeth with me. When the jealous Husband heard this, it stabbed him like a dagger

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to the heart, and, but for his greedy covetous desire to know more; he would faine have broke off confession, and got him gone. But, perceiving that it was his wisest course, he questioned further with his wife, saying: Why good Woman, doth not your husband lodge with you? Yes Sir, quoth she. How is it possible then (replied the Husband) that the Friar can lodge there with you too?

She, dissembling a farre fetcht sigh, thus answered. Reverend Sir, I know not what skilfull Art the Fryar useth, but this I am sure, every doore in our house will flye open to him, so soone as he doth but touch it. Moreover, he told me, that when he commeth unto my Chamber doore, he speaketh certaine words to himselfe, which immediately casteth my Husband into a dead sleepe, and, understanding him to bee thus sleepily entranced: he openeth the doore, entreth in, lieth downe by me, and this every night he faileth not to do. The jealous Coxcomb angerly scratching his head, and wishing his wife halfe handg, said: Mistresse, this is very badly done, for you should keepe your selfe from all men, but your husband onely. That shall I never doe, answered shee, because (indeed) I love him dearely. Why then (quoth our supposed Confessor) I cannot give you any absolution. I am the more sory Sir, said she, I came not hither to tell you any leasings, for if I could, yet I would not, because it is not good to fable with such Saint-like men as you are. You do therein (quoth hee) the better, and surely I am very sory for you, because in this dangerous condition, it will bee the utter losse of your soule: neverthelesse, both for your husbands sake and your owne, I will take some paines, and use such especiall prayers in your name, which may (perchance) greatly avayle you. And I purpose now and then, to send you 'a Novice or young Clearke of mine, whom you may safely acquaint with your minde, and signifie to me, by him, whether they have done you good, or no: and if they prove helpfull, then will we further proceed therein. Alas Sir, said she, never trouble your

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selfe, in sending any body to our house; because, if my Husband should know it, he is so extreamly jealous, as all the world cannot otherwise perswade him, but that he commeth thither for no honest intent, and so I shall live worse then now I do. Fear not that, good woman, quoth he, but beleeve it certainly, that I will have such a care in this case, as your Husband shall never speake thereof to you. If you can doe so Sir, sayde she, proceed I pray you, and I am well contented.

Confession being thus ended, and she receiving such pennance as hee appointed, she arose on her feete, and went to heare Masse; while our jealous Woodcocke (testily puffing and blowing) put off his Religious habite, returning home presently to his house, beating his braines al the way as he went, what meanes he might best devise, for the taking of his wife and the Friar together, whereby to have them both severely punished. His wife being come home from the Chappell, discerned by her Husbands lookes, that he was like to keepe but a sory Christmasse: yet he used his utmost industry, to conceale what he had done, and which she knew as well as himself. And he having fully resolved, to watch his own street doore the next night ensuing in person, in expectation of the Friars comming, saide to his Wife. I have occasion both to suppe and lodge out of my house this night, wherefore see you the streete doore to be surely made fast on the inside, and the doore at the middest of the staires, as also your own Chamber doore, and then (in Gods name) get you to bed. Whereto she answered, that all should be done as hee had appointed.

Afterward, when she saw convenient time, she went to the chink in the Wall, and making such a signe as shee was woont to doe: Phillippo came thither, to whom she declared all her mornings affayres, and what directions her husband had given her. Furthermore she saide, certaine I am, that he will not depart from the house, but sit and watch the doore without, to take one that comes not heere. If therefore, you can climbe over the house

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top, and get in at our gutter Window, you and I may conferre more familiarly together. The young Gentleman being no dullard, had his lesson quickly taught him; and when night was come, Geloso (for so must wee tearme the Cocke-braind husband) armes himselfe at all points, with a browne Bill in his hand, and so he sits to watch his owne doore. His Wife had made fast all the doores, especially that on the midst of the stayres, because he should not (by any means) come to her Chamber; and so, when the houre served, the Gentleman adventured over the house top, found the gutter Window, and the way conducting him to her Chamber, where I leave them to their further amorous conference.

Geloso, more then halfe mad with anger, first, because hee had lost his supper: next, having sitten almost all the night (which was extreemely cold and windie) his Armor much mollesting him, and yet he could see no Friar come: when day drew neere, and hee ashamed to watch there any longer; conveighed himselfe to some more convenient place, where putting off his Armes, and seeming to come from the place of his Lodging; about the ninth houre, he found his doore open, entred in, and went up the stayres, going to dinner with his Wife. Within a while after, according as Geloso had ordred the businesse, a youth came thither, seeming to be the Novice sent from the Confessor, and he being admitted to speake with her, demanded, whether shee were troubled or mollested that night passed, as formerly she had bin, and whether the partie came or no? The Woman, who knew well enough the Messenger (notwithstanding all his formall disguise) made answer: That the party expected, came not: but if hee had come, it was to no purpose; because her minde was now otherwise altred, albeit she changed not a jote from her amorous conclusion.

What should I now further say unto you? Geloso continued his watch many nights afterward, as hoping to surprize the Friar at his entrance, and his wife kept still her contented quarter, according as opportunitie served.

THE DECAMERON

NOVELL V In the conclusion, Geloso beeing no longer able to endure his bootlesse watching, nor some (more then ordinary) pleasing countenance in his wife: one day demaunded of her (with a very stearne and frowning brow) what secret sinnes shee had revealed to the ghostly Father, upon the day of her shrift? The Woman replied, that she would not tell him, neyther was it a matter reasonable, or lawfull for her to doe. Wicked Woman, answered Geloso: I knowe them all well enough, even in despite of thee, and every word that thou spakest unto him. But Huswife, now I must further know, what the Fryar is, with whom you are so farre in love, and (by meanes of his enchantments) lyeth with you every night; tell me what and who he is, or else I meane to cut your throate.

The Woman immediately made answer, it was not true, that she was in love with any Fryar. How? quoth Geloso, didst not thou confesse so much to the Ghostly Father, the other day when thou wast at shrift? No Sir, sayde she, but if I did, I am sure he would not disclose it to you, except hee suffered you to bee there present, which is an Article beyonde his dutie. But if it were so, then I confesse freely, that I did say so unto him. Make an end then quickly Wife (quoth Geloso) and tell mee who the Friar is. The Woman fell into a hearty laughter, saying. It liketh me singularly well, when a wise man will suffer himselfe to be ledde by a simple Woman, even as a Sheepe is to the slaughter, and by the hornes. If once thou wast wise, that wisdom became utterly lost, when thou felst into that divellish frensie of jealousie, without knowing anie reason for it: for, by this beastlike and no manly humor, thou hast eclipsed no meane part of my glory, and womanly reputation.

Doest thou imagine Husband, that if I were so blinded in the eyes of my head, as thou art in them which should informe thine understanding; I could have found out the Priest, that would needs bee my Confessor? I knew thee Husband to be the man, and therefore I prepared my wit accordingly, to fit thee with the foolish imagination which

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thou soughtest for, and (indeed) gave it thee. For, if thou hadst beene wise, as thou makest the world to beleewe by outward apparance, thou wouldest never have expressed such a basenesse of minde, to borrow the coulour of a sanctified cloake, thereby to undermine the secrets of thine honest meaning Wife. Wherefore, to feede thee in thy fond suspition, I was the more free in my Confession, and tolde thee truely, with whom, and how heinously I had transgressed. Did I not tell thee, that I loved a Fryar? And art not thou he whom I love, being a Fryar, and my ghostly Father, though (to thine owne shame) thou madst thy selfe so? I said moreover, that there is not any doore in our house, that can keepe it selfe shut against him, but (when he pleaseth) he comes and lies with me. Now tell me Husband, What doore in our house hath (at any time) bin shut against thee, but they are freely thine owne, and grant thee entrance? Thou art the same Friar that confest me, and lieth every night with me, and so often as thou sentst thy yong Novice or Clearke to me, as often did I truly returne thee word, when the same Fryar lay with me. But (by jealousy) thou hast so lost thine understanding, that thou wilt hardly beleewe all this.

Alas good man, like an armed Watchman, thou satst at thine owne doore all a cold Winters night, perswading mee (poore silly credulous woman) that, upon urgent occasions, thou must needs suppe and lodge from home. Remember thy selfe therefore better heereafter, become a true understanding man, as thou shouldst bee, and make not thy selfe a mocking stocke to them, who knoweth thy jealous qualities, as well as I do, and be not so watchfull over me, as thou art. For I sweare by my true honesty, that if I were but as willing, as thou art suspitious: I could deceive thee, if thou hadst an hundred eyes, as Nature affords thee but two, and have my pleasures freely, yet thou be not a jot the wiser, or my credit any way impaired.

Our wonderfull wise Geloso, who (very advisedly) considered that he had wholly heard his wives secret confession, and dreamed now on no other doubt beside, but (perceiving

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NOVELL V by her speeches) how hee was become a scorne to al men : without returning other answer, confirmed his wife to bee both wise and honest, and now when he hadde just occasion to be jealous indeede, hee utterly forswore it, and counted them all Coxcombes that would be so misguided. Wherefore, she having thus wisely wonne the way to her owne desires, and he reduced into a more humane temper: I hope there was no more neede, of clambring over houses in the night time like Cats, nor walking in at gutter Windowes; but all abuses were honestly reformed.

Madame Isabella, delighting in the company of her affected Friend, named Lionello, and she being likewise beloved by Signior Lambertuccio : At the same time as shee had entertained Lionello, shee was also visited by Lambertuccio. Her Husband returning home in the very instant; shee caused Lambertuccio to run forth with a drawne sword in his hand, and (by that meanes) made an excuse sufficient for Lionello to her husband.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

Wherein is manifestly discerned, that if Love be driven to a narrow strait in any of his attempts; yet hee can accomplish his purpose by some other supply.

WONDROUSLY pleasing to all the company, was the reported Novell of Madame Fiammetta, every one applauding the Womans wisdom, and that she had done no more, then as the jealous foole

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her husband justly deserved. But shee having ended, the King gave order unto Madame Pampinea, that now it was her turne to speake, whereupon, thus she began. There are no meane store of people who say (though very false and foolishly,) that Love maketh many to be out of their wits, and that such as fall in Love, do utterly loose their understanding. To mee this appeareth a very ydle opinion, as already hath beene approved by the related discourses, and shall also bee made manifest by another of mine owne.

In our City of Florence, famous for some good, though as many bad qualities, there dwelt (not long since) a Gentlewoman, endued with choice beauty and admirable perfections, being wife to Signior Beltramo, a very valiant Knight, and a man of great possessions. As oftentimes it commeth to passe, that a man cannot alwayes feede on one kind of bread, but his appetite will be longing after change: so fared it with this Lady, named Isabella, she being not satisfied with the delights of her Husband; grew enamoured of a young Gentleman, called Lionello, compleate of person and commendable qualities, albeit not of the fairest fortunes, yet his affection every way sutable to hers. And full well you know (faire Ladies) that where the mindes irreciprocally accorded, no dilligence wanteth for the desires execution: so this amorous couple, made many solemne protestations, untill they should bee friended by opportunity.

It fortun'd in the time of their hopefull expectation a Knight, named Signior Lambertuccio, fell likewise in love with Isabella: but because he was somewhat unsightly of person, and utterly displeasing in the eye, she grew regardless of his frequent solicitings, and would not accept either tokens, or letters. Which when hee saw, (being very rich and of great power) hee sought to compasse his intent by a contrary course, threatning her with scandall and disgrace to her reputation, and with his associates to bandie against her best friends. She knowing what manner of man he was, and how able to abuse any with infamous imputations, wisely returned him hopefull promises, though

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NOVELL VI never meaning to performe any, but onely (Lady-like) to flatter and foole him therewith.

Some few miles distant from Florence, Beltramo had a Castle of pleasure, and there his Lady Isabella used to live all Summer, as all other doe the like, being so possessed. On a day, Beltramo being ridden from home, and she having sent for Lionello, to take the advantage of her Husbands absence; accordingly he went, not doubting but to winne what he had long expected. Signior Lambertuccio on the other side, meeting Beltramo riding from his Castle, and Isabella now fit to enjoy his company: gallops thither with all possible speede, because hee would bee no longer delayed. Scarcely was Lionello entred the Castle, and receiving directions by the waiting woman, to her Ladies Chamber: but Lambertuccio galloped in at the Gate, which the woman perceiving, ranne presently and acquainted her Lady with the comming of Lambertuccio.

Now was shee the onely sorrowfull woman of the world; for nothing was now to bee feared, but stormes and tempests, because Lambertuccio, spake no other then Lightning and Thunder, and Lionello, (being no lesse affraide then shee) by her perswasion crept behind the bed, where he hid himselfe very contentedly. By this time Lambertuccio was dismounted from his Courser, which he fastened (by the bridle) to a ring in the wall, and then the waiting woman came to him, to guide him to her Lady and Mistresse: who stood ready at the staires head, graced him with a very acceptable welcome, yet marvelling much at his so sodaine comming. Lady (quoth he) I met your Husband upon the way, which granting mine accesse to see you; I come to claime your long delayed promise, the time being now so favourable for it.

Before he had uttered halfe these words, Beltramo, having forgot an especiall evidence in his Study, which was the onely occasion of his journey, came galloping backe againe into the Castell Court, and seeing such a goodly Gelding stand fastened there, could not redily imagine who was the owner thereof. The waiting woman, upon the

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sight of her Masters entring into the Court, came to her Lady, saying: My Master Beltramo is returned backe, newly alighted, and (questionlesse) comming up the staires. Now was our Lady Isabella, ten times worse affrighted then before, (having two severall amorous suters in her house, both hoping, neither speeding, yet her credite lying at the stake for either) by this unexpected returne of her Husband. Moreover, there was no possible meanes, for the concealing of Signior Lambertuccio, because his Gelding stood in the open Court, and therefore made a shrewde presumption against her, upon the least doubtfull question urged.

Nevertheless, as womens wits are alwayes best upon sudden constraints, looking forth of her window, and espying her Husband preparing to come up: she threw her selfe on her day Couch, speaking thus (earnestly) to Lambertuccio. Sir, if ever you loved mee, and would have me faithfully to beleve it, by the instant safety both of your owne honour, and my life, doe but as I advise you. Forth draw your Sword, and, with a stearne countenance, threatning death and destruction: run downe the staires, and when you are beneath, say. I sweare by my best fortunes, although I misse of thee now heere, yet I will be sure to finde thee some where else. And if my Husband offer to stay you, or moove any question to you: make no other answere, but what you formerly spake in fury. Beside, so soone as you are mounted on horsebacke, have no further conference with him, upon any occasion whatsoever; to prevent all suspition in him, of our future intendments.

Lambertuccio sware many terrible oathes, to observe her directions in every part, and having drawne forth his Sword, grasping it naked in his hand, and setting worse lookes on the businesse, then ever nature gave him, because he had spent so much labour in vaine; he failed not in a jot of the Ladies injunction. Beltramo having commanded his horse to safe custody, and meeting Lambertuccio descending downe the staires, so armed, swearing, and most

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extreamely storming, wondring extraordinarily at his threatning words, made offer to imbrace him, and understand the reason of his distemper. Lambertuccio repulsing him rudely, and setting foote in the stirrup, mounted on his Gelding, and spake nothing else but this. I sweare by the fairest of all my fortunes, although I misse of thee heere: yet I will be sure to find thee some where else, and so he gallopped mainely away.

When Beltramo was come up into his wives Chamber, hee found her cast downe upon her Couch, weeping, full of feare, and greatly discomforted; wherefore he said unto her, What is hee that Signior Lambertuccio is so extreamely offended withall, and threatneth in such implacable manner? The Lady arising from her Couch, and going neere to the Bed, because Lionello might the better heare her; returned her Husband this answeare. Husband (quoth she) never was I so dreadfully affrighted till now; for, a young Gentleman, of whence, or what he is, I know not, came running into our Castle for rescue, being pursued by Signior Lambertuccio, with a weapon ready drawne in his hand. Ascending up our stayres, by what fortune, I know not, he found my Chamber doore standing open, finding me also working on my Sampler, and in wonderfull feare and trembling.

Good Madame (quoth hee) for Gods sake helpe to save my life, or else I shall be slaine heere in your Chamber. Hearing his pittious cry, and compassionating his desperate case; I arose from my worke, and in my demaunding of whence, and what he was, that durst presume so boldly into my bed-chamber: presently came up Signior Lambertuccio also, in the same uncivill sorte, as before I tolde you, swaggering and swearing; where is this traiterous villaine? Heere-upon, I stept (somewhat stoutly) to my Chamber doore, and as hee offered to enter, with a womans courage I resisted him, which made him so much enraged against mee, that when hee saw mee to debarre his entrance; after many terrible and vile oathes and vows, hee ranne downe the stayres againe, in such like manner as you chaunced to meete him.

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Now trust mee deare wife (said Beltramo) you behaved your selfe very well and worthily: for, it would have beene a most notorious scandall to us, if a man should bee slaine in your bed-chamber: and Signior Lambertuccio carryed himselfe most dishonestly, to pursue any man so outrageously, having taken my Castle as his Sanctuary. But alas wife, what is become of the poore affrighted Gentleman? Introth Sir (quoth she) I know not, but (somewhere or other) heere-about hee is hidden. Where art thou honest friend? said plaine meaning Beltramo; Come forth and feare not, for thine enemy is gone.

Lionello, who had heard all the fore-passed discourse, which shee had delivered to her Husband Beltramo, came creeping forth amazedly (as one now very fearefully affrighted indeede) from under the further side of the bedde, and Beltramo saide to him, What a quarrell was this, between thee and furious Lambertuccio? Not any at all Sir, replied Lionello, to my knowledge, which verily perswadeth me; that either he is not well in his wits, or else he mistaketh me for some other; because, so soone as he saw me on the way, somewhat neere to this your Castle, he drew forth his Sword, and swearing an horrible oath, said. Traitor thou art a dead man. Upon these rough words, I stayed not to question the occasion of mine offending him: but fled from him so fast as possibly I could; but confesse my selfe (indeede) over-bold, by presuming into your Ladies bed chamber, which yet (equalled with her mercie) hath bin the onely meanes at this time, of saving my life.

She hath done like a good Lady, answered Beltramo, and I do verie much commend her for it. But, recollect thy dismayed spirits together, for I will see thee safely secured hence, afterward, looke to thy selfe so well as thou canst. Dinner being immediately made ready, and they having merrily feasted together: he bestowed a good Gelding on Lionello, and rode along with him to Florence, where he left him quietly in his owne lodging. The selfe-same Evening (according as Isabella had given enstruction) Lionello conferred with Lambertuccio: and such an agreement passed

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NOVELL VI betweene them, that though some rough speeches were noised abroad, to set the better colour on the businesse; yet al matters were so cleanly carried, that Beltramo never knew this queint deceitfull policy of his Wife.

Lodovico discovered to his Mistresse Madame Beatrix, how amorously he was affected to her. She cunningly sent Egano her Husband into his garden, in all respects disguised like her selfe, while (friendly) Lodovico conferred with her in the meane while. Afterward, Lodovico pretending a lascivious allurement of his Mistresse, thereby to wrong his honest Master, insted of her, beateth Egano soundly in the Garden.

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Whereby is declared, that such as keepe many honest seeming servants, may sometime finde a knave among them, and one that proves to be over-sawcy with his Master.

THIS so sodaine dexterity of wit in Isabella, related in verie modest manner by Madame Pampinea, was not onely admired by all the company; but likewise passed with as generall approbation. But yet Madam Philomena (whom the King had commanded next to succeede) peremptorily sayde. Worthy Ladies, if I am not deceived; I intend to tell you another Tale presently; as much to be commended as the last.

You are to understand then, that it is no long while since, when there dwelt in Paris a Florentine Gentleman, who falling into decay of his estate, by over-bountifull expences; undertooke the degree of a Merchant, and

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thrived so well by his trading, that he grew to great wealth, having one onely sonne by his wife, named Lodovico. This Sonne, partaking somewhat in his Fathers former height of minde, and no way inclineable to deale in Merchandize, had no meaning to be a Shopman, and therefore accompanied the Gentlemen of France, in sundry services for the King; among whom, by his singular good carriage and qualites, he happened to be not meanly esteemed. While thus he continued in the Court, it chanced, that certaine Knights, returning from Jerusalem, having there visited the holy Sepulcher, and comming into company where Lodovico was: much familiar discourse passed amongst them, concerning the faire women of France, England, and other parts of the world where they had bin, and what delicate beauties they had seene.

One in the company constantly avouched, that of all the Women by them so generally observed, there was not any comparable to the Wife of Egnano de Galluzzi, dwelling in Bologna, and her name Madam Beatrix, reputed to be the onely faire woman of the world. Many of the rest maintained as much, having bin at Bologna, and likewise seene her. Lodovico hearing the woman to be so highly commended, and never (as yet) feeling any thought of amorous inclination; became sodainely toucht with an earnest desire of seeing her, and his minde could entertaine no other matter, but onely of travailing thither to see her, yea, and to continue there, if occasion so served. The reason for his journey urged to his Father, was to visit Jerusalem, and the holy Sepulcher, which with much difficulty, at length he obtained his leave.

Being on his journey towards Bologna, by the name of Anichino, and not of Lodovico, and being there arrived; upon the day following, and having understood the place of her abiding: it was his good happe, to see the Lady at her Window; she appearing in his eye farre more faire, then all reports had made her to be. Heereupon, his affection became so enflamed to her, as he vowed, never to depart from Bologna, untill he had obtained her love. And

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devising by what meanes he might effect his hopes, he grew perswaded (setting all other attempts aside) that if he could be entertained into her Husbands service, and undergo some businesse in the house, time might tutor him to obtaine his desire. Having given his attendants sufficient allowance, to spare his company, and take no knowledge of him, selling his Horses also, and other notices which might discover him: he grew into acquaintance with the Hoste of the house where he lay, revealing an earnest desire in himselfe, to serve som Lord or worthy Gentleman, if any were willing to give him entertainment.

Now beleeeve me Sir (answered the Hoste) you seeme worthy to have a good service indeede, and I know a Noble Gentleman of this Cittie, who is named Egano: he will (without all question) accept your offer, for hee keepeth many men of verie good deserving, and you shall have my furtherance therein so much as may be. As he promised, so he performed, and taking Anichino with him unto Egano: so farre he prevailed by his friendly protestations, and good opinion of the young Gentleman; that Anichino was (without more ado) accepted into Eganoes service, then which, nothing could be more pleasing to him. Now had he the benefit of dayly beholding his hearts Mistresse, and so acceptable proved his service to Egano, that he grew very farre in love with him: not undertaking any affayres whatsoever, without the advice and direction of Anichino, so that he reposed his most especiall trust in him, as a man altogether governed by him.

It fortun'd upon a day, that Egano being ridden to flye his Hawke at the River, and Anichino remaining behinde at home, Madame Beatrix, who (as yet) had taken no notice of Anichinoes love to her (albeit her selfe, observing his faire carriage and commendable qualities, was highly pleased to have so seeming a servant) called him to play at the Chesse with her: and Anichino, coveting nothing more then to content her, carried himselfe so dexteriously in the game, that he permitted hir still to win, which was no little joy to her. When all the Gentle-women, and other friends

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there present, as spectators to behold their play, had taken their farewell, and were departed, leaving them all alone, yet gaming still: Anichino breathing forth an intire sigh, Madame Beatrix looking merrily on him, said. Tell me Anichino, art not thou angrie, to see me win? It should appeare so by that solemne sigh. No truly Madame, answered Anichino, a matter of farre greater moment, then losse of infinite games at the Chesse, was the occasion why I sighed. I pray thee (replied the Lady) by the love thou bearest me, as being my Servant (if any love at all remain in thee towards me) give me a reason for that harty sigh.

When he heard himselfe so severely conjured, by the love he bare to her, and loved none else in the world beside: he gave a farre more hart-sicke sigh, then before. Then his Lady and Mistresse entreated him seriously, to let her know the cause of those two deepe sighes: whereto Anichino thus replied. Madam, if I should tell you, I stand greatly in feare of offending you: and when I have told you, I doubt your discovery thereof to some other. Beleeve me Anichino (quoth she) therein thou neither canst, or shalt offend me. Moreover, assure thy selfe, that I will never disclose it to any other, except I may do it with thy consent. Madame (saide hee) seeing you have protested such a solemne promise to mee, I will reveale no meane secret unto you.

So, with teares standing in his eyes, he told her what he was; where he heard the first report of her singular perfections, and instantly becam enamored of her, as the maine motive of his entring into her service. Then, most humbly he entreated her, that if it might agree with her good liking, she would be pleased to commiserate his case, and grace him with her private favours. Or, if shee might not be so mercifull to him; that yet she would vouchsafe, to let him live in the lowly condition as he did, and thinke it a thankfull duty in him, onely to love her. O singular sweetnesse, naturally living in faire feminine blood! How justly art thou worthy of praise in the like occasions? Thou couldst never be wonne by sighes and teares; but

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NOVELL VII hearty imprecations have alwayes prevailed with thee, making thee apt and easie to amorous desires. If I had praises answerable to thy great and glorious deservings, my voice should never faint, nor my pen waxe weary, in the due and obsequious performance of them.

Madam Beatrix, well observing Anichino when he spake, and giving credit to his so solemne protestations; they were so powerfull in prevailing with her, that her senses (in the same manner) were enchanted; and sighes flew as violently from her, as before he had vented them: which stormy tempest being a little over-blowne, thus she spake. Anichino, my hearts deere affected Friend, live in hope, for I tell thee truly, never could gifts, promises, nor any Courtings used to me by Lords, Knights, Gentlemen, or other (although I have bin solicited by many) winne the lest grace or favour at my hand, no, nor move me to any affection. But thou, in a minute of time (compared with their long and tedious suing) hast expressed such a soveraigne potency in thy sweet words, that thou hast made me more thine, then mine owne: and beleeve it unfeinedly, I hold thee to be worthy of my love. Wherefore, with this kisse I freely give it thee, and make thee a further promise, that before this night shall be fully past, thou shalt in better manner perceive it. Adventure into my Chamber about the houre of midnight, I will leave the doore open: thou knowest on which side of the bed I use to rest, come thither and feare not: if I sleep, the least gentle touch of thy hand will wake me, and then thou shalt see how much I love thee. So, with a kinde kisse or two, the bargain was concluded, she licensing his departure for that time, and he staying in hope of his hearts happinesse, till when, he thought every houre a yeare.

In the meane while; Egano returned home from Hawking, and so soone as he had supt (being very weary) he went to bed, and his Ladie likewise with him, leaving her Chamber doore open, according as she had promised. At the houre appointed, Anichino came, finding the doore but easily put too, which (being entred) softly he closed againe,

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in the same manner as he found it. Going to the beds side where the Lady lay, and gently touching her brest with his hand, he found her to be awake, and perceiving he was come according unto promise, shee caught his hand fast with hers, and held him very strongly. Then, turning (as she could) towards Egano, she made such meanes, as hee awaked, whereupon she spake unto him as followeth.

Sir, yesternight I would have had a few speeches with you: but, in regard of your wearinesse and early going to bed, I could not have any opportunity. Now, this time and place being most convenient, I desire to bee resolved by you: Among all the men retained into your service; which of them do you thinke to be the best, most loyall, and worthiest to enjoy your love? Egano answered thus: Wife, why should you move such a question to me? Do not you know, that I never had any servant heeretofore, or ever shall have heereafter, in whom I reposed the like trust as I have done, and do in Anichino? But to what end is this motion of yours? I will tell you Sir (quoth she) and then be Judge your self, whether I have reason to move this question, or no. Mine opinion every way equalled yours, concerning Anichino, and that he was more just and faithfull to you, then any could be amongst all the rest: But Husband, like as where the water runneth stillest, the Foord is deepest, even so, his smooth lookes have beguiled both you and me. For, no longer agoe, then this verie day, no sooner were you ridden forth on Hauking, but he (belike purposely) tarrying at home, watching such a leysure as best fitted his intent: was not ashamed to sollicite mee, both to abuse your bed, and mine owne spotlesse honor.

Moreover, he prosecuted his impious purpose with such alluring perswasions: that being a weake woman, and not willing to endure over many Amorous proofes (onely to acquaint you with his most sawcie immodestie, and to revenge your selfe uppon him as best you may; your selfe beeing best able to pronounce him guiltie) I made him promise, to meete him in our Garden, presently after

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midde-night, and to finde mee sitting under the Pine-Tree; never meaning (as I am vertuous) to be there. But, that you may know the deceite and falshooode of your Servant, I would have you to put on my Night-gowne, my head Attire, and Chinne-cloath, and sitting but a short while there underneath the Pine-Tree: such is his insatiate desire, as he will not faile to come, and then you may proceede, as you finde occasion.

When Egano heard these Words, sodainely hee started out of Bed, saying. Doe I foster such a Snake in mine owne bosome? Gramercie Wife for this politicke promise of thine, and beleeeve mee, I meane to follow it effectually. So, on he put his Ladies Night-gown, her formall head Attire and Chin-cloth, going presently downe into the Garden, to expect Anichinoes comming to the Pine-Tree. But before the matter grew to this issue, let me demand of you faire Ladies, in what a lamentable condition (as you may imagine) was poore Anichino; to bee so strongly detained by her, heare all his amorous suite discovered, and likely to draw very heavy afflictions on him? Undoubtedly, he looked for immediate apprehension by Egano, imprisonment and publike punishment for his so malapert presumption: and had it proved so, she had much renowned her selfe, and dealt with him but as he had justlie deserved.

But frailtie in our feminine sex is too much prevalent, and makes us wander from vertuous courses, when we are wel onward in the way to them. Madam Beatrix, whatsoever passed betweene her and Anichino, I know not, but, either to continue this new begunne league for further time, or, to be revenged on her husbands simplicity, in over-rashlie giving credit to so smooth a ly; this was her advise to him. Anichino, quoth she, Take a good Cudgell in thy hand, then go into the Garden so farre as the Pine; and there, as if formerly thou hadst solicited mee unto this secret meeting, only but by way of approving my honestie: in my name, revile thy master so bitterly as thou canst, bestowing manie sound blowes on him with thy cudgel; yet urge the shame stil (as it were) to mee, and never leave

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him, til thou hast beaten him out of the garden, to teach him keepe his bed another time. Such an apt Scholler as Anichino was in this kind, needs no tutoring, but a word is enough to a ready Wit. To the Garden goes he, with a good willow cudgell in his hand, and comming neere to the Pine-tree, there he found Egano disguised like to his Lady, who arising from the place where he sate, went with chearefull gesture to welcome him; but Anichino (in rough and stearne manner) thus spake unto him. Wicked, shamelesse, and most immodest Woman, Art thou come, according to thine unchaste and lascivious promise? Couldst thou so easily credite, (though I tempted thee, to trie the vertue of thy continencie) I would offer such a damnable wrong to my worthy Master, that so deerely loves me, and reposeth his especiall confidence in me? Thou art much deceived in me, and shalt finde, that I hate to be false to him.

So lifting up the Cudgell, he gave him therewith halfe a score good bastinadoes, laying them on soundly, both on his armes and shoulders: and Egano feeling the smart of them, durst not speake one Worde, but fled away from him so fast as hee could, Anichino still following, and multiplying many other injurious speeches against him, with the Epithites of Strumpet, lustfull and insatiate Woman. Go thou lewde beast (quoth he) most unworthy the title of a Lady, or to be Wife unto so good a natured man, as my Mayster is, to whom I will reveale thy most ungracious incivility to Morrow, that he may punish thee a little better then I have done.

Egano being thus well beaten for his Garden walke, got within the doore, and so went up to his Chamber againe: his Lady there demanding of him, whether Anichino came according to his promise, or no? Come? quoth Egano, Yes Wife, he came, but deerely to my cost: for hee verily taking me for thee, hath beaten me most extreemly, calling me an hundred Whores and Strumpets, reputing thee to bee the wickedst Woman living. In good sadnesse Beatrix, I wondred not a little at him, that he would give

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thee any such vile speeches, with intent to wrong mee in mine honour. Questionlesse, because hee saw thee to be joviall spirited, gracious and affable towards all men; therefore hee intended to make triall of thine honest carriage. Well Sir (sayde shee) twas happy that hee tempted mee with words, and let you taste the prooffe of them by deeds: and let him thinke, that I brooke those words as distastably, as you do or can, his ill deeds. But seeing he is so just, faithfull, and loyall to you, you may love him the better, and respect him as you finde occasion.

Whereeto Egano thus replied. Now trust me wife, thou hast said very well: And drawing hence the argument of his settled perswasion; that he had the chastest Woman living to his wife, and so just a Servant, as could not be fellowed: there never was any further discoverie of this Garden-night accident. Perhaps, Madame Beatrix and Anichino might subtilly smile thereat in secret, in regard that they knew more then any other else beside did. But, as for honest meaning Egano, hee never had so much as the verie least mistrust of ill dealing, either in his Lady, or Anichino; whom hee loved and esteemed farre more respectively uppon this prooffe of his honestie towards him, then hee would or could possibly have done, without a triall so playne and pregnant.

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Arriguccio Berlinghieri, became immeasurably jealous of his Wife Simonida, who fastened a thred about her great toe, for to serve as a signall, when her amorous friend should come to visite her. Arriguccio findeth the fallacie, and while he pursueth the amorous friend, shee causeth her Maide to lye in her bed against his returne : whom he beateth extreamly, cutting away the lockes of her haire (thinking he had doone all this violence to his wife Simonida :) and afterward fetcheth her Mother and Brethren, to shame her before them, and so be rid of her. But they finding all his speeches to be utterly false ; and reputing him to bee a drunken jealous foole ; all the blame and disgrace falleth on himselfe.

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Whereby appeareth, that an Husband ought to be very well advised, when he meaneth to discover any wrong offered his wife ; except hee him-selfe do rashly run into all the shame and reproach.

IT seemed to the whole assembly, that Madam Beatrix, dealte somewhat strangely, in the manner of beguiling her husband ; and affirmed also, that Anichino had great cause of fear, when she held him so strongly by her beds side, and related all his amorous temptation. But when the King perceyved, that Madame Philomena sate

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NOVELL VIII silent, he turned to Madam Neiphila, willing her to supply the next place; who modestly smiling, thus began.

Faire Ladies, it were an heavy burthen imposed on me, and a matter much surmounting my capacity, if I should vainely imagine, to content you with so pleasing a Novell, as those have already done, by you so singularly reported: neverthesse, I must discharge my dutie, and take my fortune as it fals, albeit I hope to finde you mercifull.

You are to know then, that sometime there lived in our Citie, a very welthy Merchant, named Arriguccio Berlinghieri, who (as many Merchants have done) fondly imagined, to make himsele a Gentleman by marriage. Which that he might the more assuredly do, he took to wife a Gentlewoman, one much above his degree or element, she being named Simonida. Now, in regard that he delighted (as it is the usuall life of a Merchant) to be often abroad, and little at home, whereby shee had small benefit of his company; shee grew very forward in affection with a young Gentleman, called Signior Roberto, who had solicited hir by many amorous meanes, and (at length) prevailed to win her favor. Which favour being once obtained; affection gaddes so farre beyond al discretion, and makes Lovers so heedelesse of their private conversations: that either they are taken tardy in their folly, or else subjected to scandalous suspicion.

It came to passe, that Arriguccio, either by rumour, or some other more sensible apprehension, had received such intelligence concerning his Wife Simonida, as he grew into extraordinarie jealousie of her, refraining travaile abroad, as formerly he was wont to doe, and ceassing from his verie ordinary affayres, addicting all his care and endeavour, onely to be watchfull of his Wife; so that he never durst sleepe, untill she were by him in the bed, which was no meane mollestation to her, being thus curbd from her familiar meetings with Roberto. Neverthesse, having a long while consulted with her wittes, to find some apte meanes for conversing with him, being thereto also very

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earnestlie still solicited by him; you shall heare what course she undertooke.

Her Chamber being on the streete side, and somewhat jutting over it, she observed the disposition of her Husband, that every night it was long before he fell asleepe: but beeing once faine into it, no noyse whatsoever, could easily wake him. This his solemne and sound sleeping, emboldned her so farre, as to meete with Roberto at the streete doore, which (while her Husband slept) softly she would open to him, and therein private converse with him.

But, because shee would know the certaine houre of his comming, without the least suspition of any: she hung a thred forth of her Chamber Window, descending downe, within the compasse of Robertoes reach in the street, and the other end thereof, guided from the Window to the bed, being conveyed under the cloathes, and shee being in bed, she fastned it about her left great Toe, wherewith Roberto was sufficiently acquainted, and thus enstructed withall; that at his comming, he should plucke the thred, and if her husband was in his dead sleep, she would let go the thred, and come downe to him: but if he slept not, she would hold it strongly, and then his tarrying would prove but in vaine, there could be no meeting that night.

This devise was highly pleasing both to Roberto and Simonida, being the intelligencer of their often meeting, and many times also advising the contrary. But in the end, as the quaintest cunning may faile at one time or other; so it fortun'd one night, that Simonida being in a sound sleepe, and Arriguccio waking, because his drowsie houre was not yet come: as he extended forth his legge in the bed, he found the thred, which feeling in his hand, and perceiving it was tyed to his wives great toe; it prooved apt tinder to kindle further Jealousie, and now hee suspected some treachery indeede, and so much the rather because the thred guided (under the cloathes) from the bed to the window, and there hanging downe into the streete, as a warning to some further businesse.

Now was Arriguccio so furiously enflamed, that hee must

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needes bee further resolved in this apparant doubt: and because therein hee would not be deceived, softly he cut the thred from his wives toe, and made it fast about his owne; to trye what successe would ensue thereon. It was not long before Roberto came, and according as hee used to doe, hee pluckt the thred, which Arriguccio felt, but because hee had not tyed it fast, and Roberto pulling it over-hardly, it fell downe from the window into his hand, which he understood as his lesson, to attend her comming, and so hee did. Arriguccio stealing softly out of bed from his wife, and taking his Sword under his arme, went downe to the doore, to see who it was, with full intent of further revenge. Now, albeit he was a Merchant, yet he wanted not courage, and boldnesse of spirit, and opening the doore without any noyse, onely as his wife was wont to doe: Roberto, there waiting his entrance, perceived by the doores unfashionable opening, that it was not Simonida, but her Husband, whereupon he betooke himselfe to flight, and Arriguccio fiercely followed him. At the length, Roberto perceiving that flight avayled him not, because his enemy still pursued him: being armed also with a Sword, as Arriguccio was; he returned backe upon him, the one offering to offend, as the other stood upon his defence, and so in the darke they fought together.

Simonida awaking, even when her Husband went forth of the Chamber, and finding the thred to be cut from her toe; conjectured immediately, that her subtle cunning was discovered, and supposing her Husband in pursuite of Roberto, presently she arose; and, considering what was likely to ensue thereon, called her Chamber-maide (who was not ignorant of the businesse) and by perswasions prevailed so with her, that she lay downe in her place in the bed, upon solemne protestations and liberall promises, not to make her selfe knowne, but to suffer all patiently, either blowes, or other ill usage of her Husband, which shee would recompence in such bountifull sort, as she should have no occasion to complaine. So, putting out the watch-light, which every night burned in the Chamber, she

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departed thence, and sate downe in a close corner of the house, to see what would be the end of all this stirre, after her Husbands comming home.

The fight (as you have formerly heard) continuing betweene Roberto and Arriguccio, the neighbours hearing of the clashing of their Swords in the streets; arose out of their beds, and reproved them in very harsh manner. In which respect Arriguccio, fearing to be knowne, and ignorant also what his adversary was (no harme being as yet done on either side) permitted him to depart; and extreame full of anger, returned backe againe to his house. Being come up into his bed-chamber, thus he began; Where is this lewde and wicked woman? what? hast thou put out the light, because I should not finde thee? that shall not avayle thee, for I can well enough finde a drab in the darke. So, groping on to the beds side, and thinking hee had taken holde on his wife, he grasped the Chamber-maide, so beating her with his fists, and spurning her with his feet, that al her face was bloody and bruised. Next, with his knife he cut off a great deal of her haire, giving her the most villanous speeches as could be devised: swearing, that he would make her a shame to all the world.

You need make no doubt, but the poore maide wept exceedingly, as she had good occasion to doe: and albeit many times she desired mercy, and that hee would not bee so cruell to her: yet notwithstanding, her voyce was so broken with crying, and his impacience so extreame, that rage hindered all power of distinguishing, or knowing his wives tongue from a strangers. Having thus madly beaten her, and cut the lockes off from her head, thus he spake to her. Wicked woman, and no wife of mine, be sure I have not done with thee yet; for, although I meane not now to beate thee any longer: I will goe to thy brethren, and they shall understand thy dishonest behaviour. Then will I bring them home with me, and they perceiving how much thou hast abused both their honour and thine owne; let them deale with thee as they finde occasion, for thou art no more a

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companion for me. No sooner had he uttered these angry words, but hee went forth of the Chamber, bolting it fast on the outward side, as meaning to keepe her safely inclosed, and out of the house he went alone by himselfe.

Simonida, who had heard all this tempestuous conflict, perceiving that her Husband had lockt the streete doore after him, and was gone whether he pleased: unbolted the Chamber doore, lighted a waxe candle, and went in to see her poore maide, whom she found to be most pittifully mis-used. She comforted her as well as she could, brought her into her owne lodging Chamber, where washing her face and hurts in very soveraigne waters, and rewarding her liberally with Arriguccioes owne Gold; she held her selfe to be sufficiently satisfied. So, leaving the maide in her lodging, and returning again to her owne Chamber: she made up the bed in such former manner, as if no body had lodged therein that night. Then hanging up her Lampe fresh fild with oyle, and clearly lighted, she deckt her selfe in so decent sort, as if she had bin in no bed all that night.

Then taking sowing worke in her hand, either shirts or bands of her Husbands; hanging the Lampe by her, and sitting downe at the stayres head, she fell to worke in very serious manner, as if shee had undertaken some imposed taske.

On the other side, Arriguccio had travelled so farre from his house, till he came at last to the dwelling of Simonidaes brethren: where hee knockt so soundly, that he was quickly heard, and (almost as speedily) let in. Simonidaes brethren, and her mother also, hearing of Arriguccioes comming thither so late. Rose from their beds, and each of them having a Waxe Candle lighted, came presently to him, to understand the cause of this his so unseasonable visitation. Arriguccio, beginning at the originall of the matter, the thred found tyed about his wives great toe, the fight and household conflict after following: related every circumstance to them. And for the better prooffe of his words, he shewed them the thred it selfe, the lockes supposed of his

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wives haire, and adding withall; that they might now dispose of Simonida as themselves pleased, because she should remaine no longer in his house.

The brethren to Simonida were exceedingly offended at this relation, in regard they beleaved it for truth, and in this fury, commanded Torchés to be lighted, preparing to part thence with Arriguccio home to his house, for the more sharpe reprehension of their Sister. Which when their mother saw, she followed them weeping, first entreating one, and then the other, not to be over rash in crediting such a slander, but rather to consider the truth thereof advisedly: because the Husband might be angry with his Wife upon some other occasion, and having outraged her, made this the meanes in excuse of himselfe. Moreover she said, that she could not chuse but wonder greatly, how this matter should thus come to passe: because she had good knowledge of her daughter, during the whole course of her education, faultlesse and blamelesse in every degree; with many other good words of her beside, as proceeding from naturall affection of a mother.

Being come to the house of Arriguccio, entring in, and ascending up the stayres: they heard Simonida sweetly singing at her working; but pausing, upon hearing their rude trampling, shee demaunded, who was there. One of the angry brethren presently answered: Lewde woman as thou art, thou shalt know soone enough who is heere: Our blessed Lady be with us (quoth Simonida) and sweet Saint Frances helpe to defend me, who dare use such unseemely speeches? Starting up and meeting them on the staire head: Kinde brethren, (said she) is it you? What, and my loving mother too? For sweet Saint Charities sake, what may be the reason of your comming hither in this manner. Shee being set downe againe to her worke, so neatly appparelled, without any signe of outrage offered her, her face unblemished, her haire comely ordered, and differing wholly from the former speeches of her Husband: the Brethren marvelled thereat not a little; and asswaging somewhat the impetuous torrent of their rage, began to

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demaund in coole blood, (as it were) from what ground her Husbands complaints proceeded, and threatning her roughly, if she would not confesse the truth intirely to them.

Ave Maria (quoth Simonida, crossing her selfe) Alas deare Brethren, I know not what you say, or meane, nor wherein my Husband should bee offended, or make any complaint at all of me. Arriguccio hearing this, looked on her like a man that had lost his Senses : for well he remembred, how many cruell blowes he had given her on the face, beside scratches of his nailes, and spurnes of his feet, as also the cutting of her haire, the least shew of all which misusage, was not now to be seene. Her brethren likewise briefly told her, the whole effect of her Husbands speeches, shewing her the thred, and in what cruell manner he sware hee did beate her. Simonida, turning then to her Husband, and seeming as confounded with amazement, said. How is this Husband? what doe I heare? would you have me supposed (to your owne shame and disgrace) to be a bad woman, and your selfe a cruell curst man, when (on either side) there is no such matter? When were you this night heere in the house with mee? Or when should you beate mee, and I not feele nor know it? Beleeve me (sweete heart) all these are meerely miracles to me.

Now was Arriguccio ten times more mad in his minde, then before, saying. Divell, and no woman, did wee not this night goe both together to bed? Did not I cut this thred from thy great toe, tyed it to mine, and found the craftie compact betweene thee and thy Minnion? Did not I follow and fight with him in the streets? Came I not backe againe, and beate thee as a Strumpet should be? And are not these the locks of haire, which I my selfe did cut from thy head?

Alas Sir (quoth she) where have you been? doe you know what you say? you did not lodge in this house this night, neither did I see you all the whole day and night, till now.

But leaving this, and come to the matter now in question, because I have no other testimony then mine owne words.

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You say, that you did beate me, and cut those lockes of haire from my head. Alas Sir, why should you slander your selfe? In all your life time you did never strike me. And to approve the truth of my speeches, doe you your selfe, and all else heere present, looke on me advisedly, if any signe of blow or beating is to be seene on me. Nor were it an easie matter for you to doe either to smite, or so much as lay your hand (in anger) on me, it would cost dearer then you thinke for. And whereas you say, that you did cut those lockes of haire from my head; it is more then either I know, or felt, nor are they in colour like to mine: but, because my Mother and brethren shall be my witnesses therein, and whether you did it without my knowledge; you shall all see, if they be cut, or no. So, taking off her head attyre, she displayed her hayre over her shoulders, which had suffered no violence, neither seemed to bee so much as uncivilly or rudely handled.

When the mother and brethren saw this, they began to murmure against Arriguccio, saying. What thinke you of this Sir? you tell us of strange matters which you have done, and all proving false, we wonder how you can make good the rest. Arriguccio looked wilde, and confusedly, striving still to maintaine his accusation: but seeing every thing to bee flatly against him, he durst not attempt to speake one word. Simonida tooke advantage of this distraction in him, and turning to her brethren, saide. I see now the marke whereat he aymeth, to make me doe what I never meante: Namely, that I should acquaint you with his vile qualities, and what a wretched life I leade with him, which seeing hee will needes have me to reveale; beare with me if I doe it upon compulsion.

Mother and Brethren, I am verily perswaded, that those accidents which he disclosed to you, hath doubtlesse (in the same manner) happened to him, and you shall heare how. Very true it is, that this seeming honest man, to whom (in a lucklesse houre) you married me, stileth himselfe by the name of a Merchant, coveting to be so accounted and credited, as holy in outward appearance, as a Religious

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Monke, and as demure in lookes, as the modestest Maide: like a notorious common drunkard, is a Taverne hunter, where making his luxurius matches, one while with one Whore, then againe with another; hee causeth mee every night to sit tarrying for him, even in the same sort as you found me: sometimes till midnight, and otherwhiles till broad day light in the morning.

And questionlesse, being in his wounted drunken humour, hee hath lyen with one of his sweet Consorts, about whose toe he found the thred, and finding her as false to him, as he hath alwayes been to me: Did not onely beat her, but also cut the haire from her head. And having not yet recovered his sences, is verily perswaded, and cannot be altered from it; but that hee performed all this villany to me. And if you doe but advisedly observe his countenance, he appeareth yet to be more then halfe drunke.

But whatsoever he hath said concerning me, I make no account at all thereof, because he spake it in his drunkenesse, and as freely as I forgive him, even so (good Mother and kinde Brethren,) let mee entreate you to do the like.

When the Mother had heard these words, and confidently beleevd her Daughter: she began to torment her selfe with anger, saying. By the faith of my body Daughter, this unkindnesse is not [to] be endured, but rather let the dogge be hanged, that his qualities may be knowne, he being utterly unworthy, to have so good a woman to his wife, as thou art. What could he have done more, if he had taken thee in the open streete, and in company of some wanton Gallants? In an unfortunate houre wast thou married to him, base jealous Coxecombe as he is, and it is quite against sense, or reason, that thou shouldest be subject to his fooleries. What was hee, but a Merchant of Eale-skinnes or Orenge, bred in some paltry countrey village; taken from Hogge-rubbing; clothed in Sheepes-Sattin, with Clownish Startops, Leather stockings, and Caddies garters: His whole habite not worth three

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shillings: And yet he must have a faire Gentlewoman to his Wife, of honest fame, riches and reputation; when, comparing his pedegree with hers, hee is farre unfit to wipe her shooes.

Oh my deare sonnes, I would you had followed my counsell, and permitted her to mate in the honourable family of Count Guido, which was much mooved, and seriously pursued. But you would needs bestow her on this goodly Jewell; who, although shee is one of the choysest beauties in Florence, chaste, honest and truely vertuous: Is not ashamed at midnight, to proclaime her for a common whore, as if we had no better knowledge of her. But by the blessed mother of Saint John, if you would be ruled by mine advise; our law should make him dearely smart for it.

Alas my sonnes, did I not tell you at home in our owne house, that his words were no way likely to prove true? Have not your eyes observed his unmannerly behaviour to your Sister? If I were as you are, hearing what he hath said, and noting his drunken carriage beside; I should never give over, as long as he had any life left in him. And were I a man, as I am a woman, none other then my selfe should revenge her wrongs, making him a publike spectacle to all drabbing drunkards.

When the brethren had heard and observed all these occurrences; in most bitter manner they railed on Arriguccio, bestowing some good bastinadoes on him beside, concluding thus with him in the end. Quoth one of them, Wee will pardon this shamefull abusing of our Sister, because thou art a notorious drunkard: but looke to it (on perill of thy life) that we have no more such newes hereafter; for, beleieve it unfainedly, if any such impudent rumours happen to our eares, or so much as a flying fame thereof; thou shalt surely be paide for both faults together.

So home againe went they, and Arriguccio stood like one that had neither life or motion, not knowing (whether what he had done) was true, or no, or if he dreamed all this while, and so (without uttering any word) he left his

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VIII Wife, and went quietly to bed. Thus by her wisdom, she did not onely prevent an imminent perill: but also made a free and open passage, to further contentment with her amourous friend, yet dreadlesse of any distaste or suspition in her Husband.

Lydia, a Lady of great beauty, birth, and honor, being Wife to Nicostratus, Governour of Argos, falling in love with a Gentleman, named Pyrrhus; was requested by him (as a true testimony of her unfeigned affection) to performe three severall actions of her selfe. She did accomplish them all, and imbraced and kissed Pyrrhus in the presence of Nicostratus; by perswading him, that whatsoever he saw, was meere false.

THE NINTH NOVELL

Wherein is declared, that great Lords may sometime be deceived by their Wives, as well as men of meaner condition.

THE Novell delivered, by Madame Neiphila, seemed so pleasing to all the Ladies; as they could not refrain from hearty laughter, beside much liberality of speech. Albeit the King did oftentimes urge silence, and commanded Pamphilus to follow next. So, when attention was admitted, Pamphilus began in this order. I am of opinion, faire Ladies, that there is not any matter, how uneasie or doubtfull soever it may seeme to be; but the man or woman that affecteth fervently, dare boldly attempt, and effectually accomplish. And this perswasion of mine, although it hath bene sufficiently approved, by many of our passed Novels: Yet notwithstanding, I

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shall make it much apparent to you, by a present discourse of mine owne. Wherein I have occasion to speake of a Lady, to whom Fortune was more favourable, then either reason or judgement, could give direction. In which regard, I would not advise any of you, to entertaine so high an imagination of minde, as to tracke her footsteps of whom I am now to speake: because Fortune containeth not alwayes one and the same disposition, neither can all mens eyes be blinded after one manner. And so proceed we to our Tale.

In Argos, a most ancient Citie of Achaya, much more renowned by her precedent Kings, then wealth, or any other great matter of worth: there lived as Lieutenant or Governour thereof, a Noble Lord, named Nicostratus, on whom (albeit hee was well stept into yeares) Fortune bestowed in marriage a great Lady, no lesse bold of spirit, then choisely beautifull. Nicostratus, abounding in treasure and wealthy possessions, kept a goodly traine of Servants, Horses, Houndes, Hawkes, and what else not, as having an extraordinary felicity in all kinds of game, as singular exercises to maintaine his health.

Among his other Servants and Followers, there was a yong Gentleman, gracefull of person, excellent in speech, and every way as active as no man could be more: his name Pyrrhus, highly affected of Nicostratus, and more intimately trusted then all the rest. Such seemed the perfections of this Pyrrhus, that Lydia (for so was the Lady named) began to affect him very earnestly, and in such sort, as day or night shee could take no rest, but devised all meanes to compasse her harts desire. Now, whether he observed this inclination of her towards him, or else would take no notice thereof, it could not be discerned by any outward apprehension: which moved the more impatiency in her, and drove her hopes to despairing passions. Wherein to finde some comfort and ease, she called an ancient Gentlewoman of her Chamber, in whom shee reposed especiall confidence, and thus she spake to her.

Lesca, The good turnes and favours thou hast received

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from me, should make thee faithfull and obedient to me: and therefore set a locke uppon thy lippes, for revealing to any one whatsoever, such matters as now I shall impart to thee; except it be to him that I command thee. Thou perceivest Lesca, how youthfull I am, apt to all sprightly recreations, rich, and abounding in all that a woman can wish to have, in regard of Fortunes common and ordinary favours: yet I have one especiall cause of complaint: namely, the inequality of my Mariage, my Husband being over-ancient for me; in which regard, my youth finds it selfe too highly wronged, being defeated of those duties and delights, which Women (farre inferiour to me) are continuallie cloyed withall, and I am utterly deprived of. I am subject to the same desires they are, and deserve to taste the benefit of them, in as ample manner, as they do or can.

Hitherto I have lived with the losse of time, which yet (in some measure) may be releevd and recompenced: For, though Fortune were mine enemy in Mariage, by such a disproportion of our conditions: yet she may befriend in another nature, and kindly redeeme the injury done me. Wherefore Lesca, to be as compleate in this case, as I am in all the rest beside; I have resolved upon a private Friend, and one more worthy then any other, Namely, my Servant Pyrrhus, whose youth carieth some correspondency with mine; and so constantly have I settled my love to him, as I am not well, but when I thinke on him, or see him: and (indeede) shall dye, except the sooner I may enjoy him. And therefore, if my life and well-fare be respected by thee, let him understand the integrity of mine affection, by such good means as thou findest it most expedient to be done: entreating him from me, that I may have some conference with him, when he shall thereto be solicited by me.

The Chamber-Gentlewoman Lesca, willingly undertooke the Ladies Embassie; and so soone as opportunity did favor her: having withdrawne Pyrrhus into an apt and commodious place, shee delivered the Message to him, in the best manner she could devise. Which Pyrrhus hearing,

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did not a little wonder thereat, never having noted any such matter; and therefore sodainly conceived, that the Lady did this onely to try him; whereupon, somewhat roundly and roughly, hee returned this answer. Lesca, I am not so simple, as to credite any such Message to be sent from my Lady, and therefore be better advised of thy words. But admit that it should come from her, yet I cannot be perswaded, that her soule consented to such harsh Language, far differing from a forme so full of beauty. And yet admit againe, that her hart and tongue herein were relatives: My Lord and Master hath so farre honoured mee, and so much beyond the least part of merite in mee: as I will rather dye, then any way offer to disgrace him: And therefore I charge thee, never more to move mee in this matter.

Lesca, not a jot danted at his stearne words, presently she saide. Pyrrhus, Both in this and all other Messages my Lady shall command me, I wil speake to thee whensoever shee pleaseth, receive what discontent thou canst thereby; or make presumption of what doubts thou maist devise. But as I found thee a senselesse fellow, dull, and not shaped to any understanding, so I leave thee: And in that anger parted from him, carrying backe the same answer to her Lady. She no sooner heard it, but instantly shee wished her selfe to be dead; and within some few dayes after, she conferred againe with her Chamber-woman, saying. Lesca, thou knowest well enough, that the Oxe falleth not at the first blow of the Axe, neither is the victory won, upon a silly and shallow adventure: Wherefore, I thinke it convenient, that once more thou shouldst make another tryall of him, who (in prejudice to me) standeth so strictly on his loyalty, and choosing such an houre as seemeth most commodious, soundly possesse him with my tormenting passions. Bestirre thy Wittes, and tippe thy tongue with a Womans eloquence, to effect what I so earnestly desire: because, by languishing in this love-sicke affliction, it will bee the danger of my death, and some severe detriment to him, to be the occasion of so great a losse.

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Lesca, comforted her Lady, so much as lay in her power to doe, and having sought for Pyrrhus, whom she found at good leysure; and, in a pleasing humor, thus she beganne. Pyrrhus, some few dayes since I tolde thee, in what extreame Agonies thy Lady and mine was, onely in regarde of her love to thee: and now againe I come once more, to give thee further assurance thereof: Wherefore, beleewe it unfeignedly, that if thy obstinacie continue still, in like manner as the other day it did, expect very shortly to heare the tydings of her death.

It is my part therefore, to entreat thee, to comfort her long languishing desires: but if thou persist in thy harsh opinion, in stead of reputing thee a wise and fortunate yong man, I shall confesse thee to bee an ignoraunt Asse. What a glorie is it to thee, to be affected of so faire and worthy a Lady, beyond all men else whatsoever? Next to this, tell me, how highly maist thou confesse thy selfe beholding to Fortune, if thou but duly consider, how shee hath elected thee as sole soveraigne of her hopes, which is a crowne of honour to thy youth and a sufficient refuge against all wants and necessities? Where is any to thy knowledge like thy selfe, that can make such advantage of his time, as thou maist do, if thou wert wise? Where canst thou find any one to go beyond thee in Armes, Horses, sumptuous garments, and Gold, as will be heaped on thee, if Lydia may be the Lady of thy love? Open then thine understanding to my words, returne into thine owne soule, and bee wise for thy selfe.

Remember (Pyrrhus) that Fortune presents her selfe but once before any one, with cheerefull lookes, and her lappe wide open of richest favours, where if choice be not quickly made, before she folde it up, and turn her backe; let no complaint afterward be made of her, if the Fellow that had so faire an offer, proove to be miserable, wretched, and a Begger, only thorow his owne negligence. Beside, what else hath formerly bin saide, there is now no such neede of loyaltie in servants to their Ladies, as should be among deare Friends and Kindred: but servants ought rather

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(as best they may) be such to their Masters, as they are to them. Doest thou imagine, that if thou hadst a faire Wife, Mother, Daughter, or Sister, pleasing in the eye of our Nicostratus; he would stand on such nice tearmes of duty or Loyaltie, as now thou doest to his Ladie? Thou wert a verie foole to rest so perswaded. Assure thy selfe, that if entreaties and faire meanes might not prevaile, force, and compulsion (whatsoever ensued thereon) would winne the masterie. Let us then use them, and the commodities unto them belonging, as they would us and ours. Use the benefit of thy Fortune, and beware of abusing her favour. She yet smiles on thee; but take heede least she turne her backe, it will then be over-late to repent thy folly. And if my Ladie die through thy disdaine, be assured, that thou canst not escape with life, beside open shame and disgrace for ever.

Pyrthus, who had often considered on Lescaes first message, concluded with himselfe; that if any more she moved the same matter: hee would returne her another kinde of answer, wholly yeelding to content his Lady; provided, that he might remaine assured, concerning the intyre truth of the motion, and that it was not urged onely to trie him, wherefore, thus he replied. Lesca, do not imagine mee so ignorant, as not to know the certaintie of all thy former allegations, confessing them as freely as thou doest, or canst. But yet let mee tell thee withall, that I knowe my Lord to be wise and judicious, and having committed all his affaires to my care and trust: never blame mee to misdoubt, least my Ladie (by his counsell and advice) make thee the messenger of this motion, therby to call my Fidelitie in question.

To cleare which doubt, and for my further assurance of her well meaning toward me; if she wil undertake the performance of three such things as I must needes require in this case: I am afterward her owne, in any service she can command me. The first of them, is; that in the presence of my Lord and Master, she kill his faire Faulcon, which so dearly hee affecteth. The second, to send me a

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NOVELL IX locke or tuft of his beard, being puld away with her owne hand. The third and last, with the same hand also, to pluck out one of his best and soundest teeth, and send it mee as her loves true token. When I finde all these three effectually performed, I am wholly hers, and not before.

These three strict impositions, seemed to Lesca, and her Ladie likewise, almost beyond the compasse of all possibility. Nevertheles Love, being a powerfull Oratour in perswading, as also adventurous even on the most difficult dangers; gave her courage to undertake them all: sending Lesca backe againe to him, with full assurance, of these more then Herculean labours. Moreover, her selfe did intend to adde a fourth taske, in regard of his strong opinion concerning the great Wisedome of his Lord and Maister. After she had effected all the other three, she would not permit him to kisse her, but before his Lords face: which yet should be accomplished in such sort, as Nicostratus himselfe should not beleeve it, although apparantly he saw it. Well, (quoth Pyrrhus) when all these wonders are performed, assure my Ladie, that I am truelie hers.

Within a short while after, Nicostratus made a solemne Feastival (according as yearly he used to doe) in honour of his birth day, inviting many Lords and Ladies thereto. On which rejoycing day, so soone as dinner was ended, and the Tables withdrawne: Lydia came into the great Hall, where the Feast was solemnly kept; very rich and costly apparrelled; and there, in presence of Pyrrhus, and the whole assemblie, going to the Perch whereon the Faulcone sate, wherein her Husband tooke no little delight, and having untied her, as if shee meant to beare her on her Fist: tooke her by the Jesses, and beating her against the wal, killed her. Nicostratus beholding this, called out aloud unto her, saying. Alas Madame! What have you done? She making him no answere, but turning to the Lords and Ladies, which had dined there, spake in this manner.

Ill should I take revenge on a King, that had offended me, if I had not so much heart, as to wreake my spleene on

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a paltry Hawke. Understand then, worthy Lords and Ladies, that this Faulcone hath long time robbed me of those delights, which men (in meere equitie) ought to have with their wives: because continually, so soone as breake of day hath appeared, my Husband, starting out of bed, makes him selfe readie, presently to Horsse, and with this Faulcon on his Fist, rides abroad to his recreation in the Fields. And I, in such forsaken sort as you see, am left all alone in my bed, discontented and despised: often vowing to my selfe, to bee thus revenged as now I am, being with-held from it by no other occasion, but onely want of a fit and apt time, to do it in the presence of such persons, as might bee just Judges of my wrongs, and as I conceive you all to be.

The Lords and Ladies hearing these words, and beleiving this deed of hers to be done no otherwise, but out of her entire affection to Nicostratus, according as her speeches sounded: compassionately turning towards him (who was exceedingly displeased) and all smiling, said. Now in good sadnesse Sir; Madame Lydia hath done well, in acting her just revenge upon the Hawke, that bereft her of her Husbands kinde companie; then which nothing is more precious to a loving wife, and a hell it is to live without it. And Lydia, being sodainly withdrawne into her chamber; with much other friendly and familiar talke, they converted the anger of Nicostratus into mirth and smiling.

Pyrhus, who had diligently observed the whole cariage of this businesse, saide to himselfe. My Ladie hath begun well, and proceeding on with no worse successe, will (no doubt) bring her love to an happy conclusion. As for the Lady her selfe, she having thus kild the Hawke, it was no long while after, but being in the Chamber with her husband, and they conversing familiarly together; she began to jest with him, and hee in the like manner with her, tickling and toying each the other, till at the length she played with his beard, and now she found occasion aptly serving, to effect the second taske imposed by Pyrrhus.

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So, taking fast hold on a small tuft of his beard, she gave a sodaine snatch, and plucked it away quite from his chin. Whereat Nicostratus beeing angerly moved, she (to appease his distaste) pleasantly thus spake. How now my Lord? Why do you looke so frowningly? What? Are you angry for a few loose haire of your beard? How then should I take it, when you plucke mee by the haire of my head, and yet I am not a jot discontented, because I know you do it but in jesting manner? These friendly speeches cut off all further contention, and she kepte charily the tuft of her Husbands beard, which (the verie selfe-same day) shee sent to Pyrrhus her hearts chosen friend.

But now concerning the third matter to be adventured, it drove her to a much more serious consideration, then those two which shee had already so well and exactly performed. Notwithstanding, like a Ladie of unconquerable spirit, and (in whom) Love enlarged his power more and more: she sodainly conceited, what course was best to bee kept in this case, forming her attempt in this manner. Upon Nicostratus wayted two young Gentlemen, as Pages of his Chamber, whose Fathers had given them to his service, to learne the manners of honourable Courtship, and those qualities necessarily required in Gentlemen. One of them, when Nicostratus sate downe to dinner or supper, stood in Office of his Carver, delivering him all the meates whereon he fed. The other (as Taster) attended on his Cup, and he dranke no other drinke, but what hee brought him, and they both were highly pleasing unto him.

On a day, Lydia called these two youths aside; and, among some other speeches, which served but as an induction to her intended policy; she perswaded them, that their mouths yeilded an unsavoury and il-pleasing smell, whereof their Lord seemed to take dislike. Wherefore she advised them, that at such times as they attended on him in their severall places: they should (so much as possibly they could) withdraw their heads aside from him, because their breath might not be noyous unto him. But withall, to have an especiall care, of not disclosing to any

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one, what she had told them; because (out of meere love) she had acquainted them therewith: which very constantly they beleaved, and followed the same direction as she had advised, being loath to displease, where service bound them to obey. Choosing a time fitting for her purpose, when Nicostratus was in private conference with her, thus she began. Sir, you observe not the behaviour of your two Pages, when they wait on you at the Table? Yes but I do wife (quoth he) how squemishly they turn their heads aside from me, and it hath often bin in my minde, to understand a reason why they do so.

Seating her selfe by him, as if shee had some weighty matter to tell him; she proceeded in this manner. Alas my Lord, you shall not need to question them, because I can sufficiently resolve you therein: which (neverthelesse) I have long concealed, because I would not be offensive to you. But in regard, it is now manifestly apparant, that others have tasted, what (I imagined) none but my selfe did, I will no longer hide it from you. Assuredly Sir, there is a most strange and unwonted ill-savour, continually issuing from your mouth, smelling most noysomely, and I wonder what should be the occasion. In former times, I never felt any such foule breathing to come from you: and you, who do daily converse with so many worthy persons, should seeke meanes to be rid of so great an annoyance. You say verie true wife (answered Nicostratus) and I protest to you on my Credite, I feelee no such ill smell, neither know what should cause it, except I have som corrupted tooth in my mouth. Perhaps Sir (quoth she) it may be so, and yet you feelee not the savour which others do, yea, very offensively.

So, walking with her to a Window, he opened wide his mouth, the which nicely shee surveyed on either side, and, turning her head from him, as seeming unable to endure the savour: starting, and shrieking out aloud, she said. Santa Maria! What a sight is this? Alas my good Lord, How could you abide this, and for so long a while? Heere is a tooth on this side, which (so farre as I can perceive)

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NOVELL IX is not onely hollow and corrupted : but also wholly putrified and rotten, and if it continue still in your head, beleeeve it for a truth, that it will infect and spoile all the rest neere it. I would therefore counsell you, to let it be pluckt out, before it breede your further danger. I like your counsell well Lydia, replied Nicostratus, and presently intend to follow it; Let therefore my Barber be sent for, and, without any longer delay, he shall plucke it forth instantly.

How sir? (quoth she,) your Barber? Uppon mine Honour, there shall come no Barber heere. Why Sir, it is such a rotten Tooth, and standeth so fairely for my hand: that, without helpe or advice of any Barber, let mee alone for plucking it forth, without putting you to any paine at all. Moreover, let me tell you Sir, those Tooth-drawers are so rude and cruell, in performing such Offices, as my heart cannot endure, that you should come within compasse of their currish courtesie, neither shall you Sir, if you will be ruled by me. If I should faile in the manner of their facilitie, yet love and duty hath enstrusted me, to forbear your least paining, which no unmannerly Barber will do.

Having thus spoken, and he well contented with her kinde offer, the instruments were brought, which are used in such occasions, all being commanded forth of the Chamber, but onely Lesca, who evermore kept still in her company. So, locking fast the doore, and Nicostratus being seated, as she thought fittest for her purpose, she put the Tanacles into his mouth, catching fast hold on one of his soundest teeth: which, notwithstanding his loud crying, Lesca held him so strongly, that forth she pluckt it, and hid it, having another tooth readie made hot and bloody, very much corrupted and rotten, which she helde in the Tanacles, and shewed to him, who was well-neere halfe dead with anguish. See Sir (quoth she) was this Tooth to be suffered in your head, and to yeeld so foule a smell as it did? He verily beleeeving what she said, albeit hee had endured extreame paine, and still complained on her harsh and violent pulling it out: rejoyced

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yet, that he was now ridde of it, and she comforting him on the one side, and the anguish asswaging him on the other, he departed forth of the Chamber.

In the mean while, by Lesca she sent the sound tooth to Pyrrhus, who (wondering not a little at her so many strange attempts, which hee urged so much the rather, as thinking their performance impossible, and in meere loyall duty to his Lord) seeing them all three to be notably effected; he made no further doubt of her intire love towards him, but sent her assurance likewise, of his readinesse and serviceable diligence, whensoever she would command him.

Now, after the passage of all these adventures, hardly to bee undertaken by any other Woman: yet she held them insufficient for his security, in the grounded perswasion of her love to him, except shee performed another of her owne, and according as shee had boldly promised. Houres do now seeme dayes, and dayes multiplicitie of yeeres, till the kisse may be given, and receyved in the presence of Nicostratus, yet hee himselfe to avouch the contrary.

Madam Lydia (upon a pretended sicknesse) keepeth her chamber, and as women can hardly be exceeded in dissimulation: so, shee wanted no wit, to seeme exquisitely cunning, in all the outwarde apparances of sicknesse. One day after dinner, shee being visited by Nicostratus, and none attending on him but Pyrrhus onely: she earnestly entreated, that as a mitigation, to some inward afflictions which she felt, they would helpe to guide her into the Garden.

Most gladly was her motion graunted, and Nicostratus gently taking her by one arme, and Pyrrhus by the other, so they conducted her into the Garden, seating her in a faire floury Grasse-plot, with her backe leaning to a Peare-tree. Having sitten there an indifferent while, and Pyrrhus, being formerly enstructed, in the directions which she had given him, thus shee spake, some-what faintly. Pyrrhus, I have a kinde of longing desire upon a sodaine, to taste of these Peares: Wherefore, climbe up into the Tree, and cast me downe one or two; which instantly hee did. Being

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aloft in the Tree, and throwing downe some of the best and ripest Peares; at length (according to his premeditated Lesson) looking downe, he said.

Forbeare my Lord, Do you not see, in how weake and feeble condition my Ladie is, being shaken with so violent a sicknesse? And you Madam, how kinde and loving soever you are to my Lord, Are you so little carefull of your health, being but now come forth of your sicke Chamber, to be ruffled and tumbled in such rough manner? Though such dalliances are not amisse in you both; being fitter for the private Chamber, then an open garden, and in the presence of a servant: yet time and place should alwaies bee respectively considered, for the avoiding of ill example, and better testimonie of your owne Wisedomes, which ever should be like your selves. But if so soone, and even in the heate of a yet turbulent sicknesse, your equall love can admit these kisses and embraces: your private Lodgings were much more convenient, where no Servants eye can see such Wantonnesse, nor you be reproved of indiscretion, for being too publique in your Familiaritie.

Madame Lydia, sodainely starting, and turning unto her Husband, sayde. What doth Pyrrhus prate? Is he well in his wittes? Or is he franticke? No Madame, replied Pyrrhus, I am not franticke. Are you so fond as to thinke that I do not see your folly? Nicostratus wondering at his Words, presently answered. Now trust me Pyrrhus, I think thou dreamest. No my Lord, replied Pyrrhus, I dreame not a jot, neither do you, or my Ladie: but if this Tree could afford the like kindnesse to me, as you do to her, there would not a Peare bee left upon it. How now Pyrrhus? (quoth Lydia) this language goeth beyond our understanding, it seemeth thou knowest not what thou saist. Beleeve me husband, if I were as well as ever I have bin, I would climb this tree, to see those idle wonders which hee talketh of: for, while he continueth thus above, it appeareth, hee can finde no other prattle, albeit he taketh his marke amisse.

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Heereupon, he commanded Pyrrhus to come downe, and being on the ground: Now Pyrrhus (quoth he) tell me what thou saydst. Pyrrhus, pretending an alteration into much amazement, straungely looking about him, saide; I know not verie well (my Lord) what answere I should make you, fearing least my sight hath bin abused by error: for when I was aloft in that Tree, it seemed manifestly to me: that you embraced my Lady (though somewhat rudely, in regard of her perillous sicknesse, yet lovingly) and as youthfully as in your yonger daies, with infinite kisses, and wanton dalliances, such as (indeede) deserved a far more private place in my poore opinion. But in my descending downe, mee thought you gave over that amorous familiaritie, and I found you seated as I left you. Now trust mee Pyrrhus, answered Nicostratus, Thy tongue and wit have very strangely wandred, both from reason and all reall apprehension: because we never stirred from hence, since thou didst climbe up into the Tree, neither mooved otherwise, then as now thou seest us. Alas my Lord (saide Pyrrhus) I humbly crave pardon for my presumption, in reprooving you for meddling with your owne: which shal make me hereafter better advised, in any thing what soever I heare or see.

Mervaille and amazement, encreased in Nicostratus far greater then before, hearing him to avouch still so constantly what he had seene, no contradiction being able to alter him, which made him rashly sweare and say. I will see my selfe, whether this Peare-tree bee enchanted, or no: and such wonders to be seene when a man is up in it, as thou wouldst have us to beleieve. And being mounted up so hy, that they were safe from his sodaine comming on them, Lydia had soone forgotten her sicknes, and the promised kisse cost her above twenty more, beside verie kinde and hearty embraces, as lovingly respected and entertained by Pyrrhus. Which Nicostratus beholding aloft in the tree; cryed out to her, saying. Wicked woman, What doest thou meane? And thou villain Pyrrhus, Darst thou abuse thy Lord, who hath reposed so much trust in thee?

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So, descending in haste downe againe, yet crying so to them still: Lydia replyed, Alas my Lord, Why do you raile and rave in such sort? So, hee found her seated as before, and Pyrrhus waiting with dutiful reverence, even as when he climbed up the Tree: but yet he thought his sight not deceyved, for all their demure and formall behaviour, which made him walke up and downe, extreemely fuming and fretting unto himselfe, and which in some milder manner to qualifie, Pyrrhus spake thus to him.

I deny not (my good Lord) but freely confesse, that even as your selfe, so I, being above in the Tree, had my sight most falsely deluded: which is so apparantly confirmed by you, and in the same sort, as there needeth no doubt of both our beguiling; in one and the same suspitious nature. In which case to be the more assuredly resolved, nothing can be questioned, but whether your beleefe do so farre misleade you, as to thinke, that my Ladie (who hath alwayes bene most wise, loyall, and vertuous,) would so shamefullie wrong you: yea, and to performe it before your face, wherein I dare gadge my life to the contrary. Concerning my selfe, it is not fit for mee, to argue or contest in mine owne commendation: you that have ever knowne the sincerity of my service, are best able to speake in my behalfe: and rather wold I be drawne in peeces with foure wilde horses, then bee such an injurious slave to my Lord and Master.

Now then, it can be no otherwise, but we must needs rest certainly perswaded, that the guile and offence of this false appearance, was occasioned by thee onely. For all the world could not make me otherwise beleeve, but that I saw you kisse and most kindly imbrace my Lady: if your owne eyes had not credited the like behaviour in me to her, of which sinne, I never conceived so much as a thought. The Lady (on the other side) seeming to be very angrily incensed, starting faintly up on her feet, yet supporting her selfe by the tree, said. It appeareth Sir, that you have entertained a goodly opinion of me, as, if I were so lewde and lasciviously disposed, or addicted to the

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very least desire of wantonnesse : that I would bee so forgetfull of mine owne honour, as to adventure it in your sight, and with a servant of my house? Oh Sir, such women as are so familiarly affected, need learne no wit of men in amorous matters; their private Chambers shall be better trusted, then an open blabing and tell-tale Garden.

Nicostratus, who verily beleevved what they had both said, and that neither of them would adventure such familiarity before his face: would talke no more of the matter, but rather studied of the rarity of such a miracle, not seene, but in the height of the tree, and changing againe up on the descent. But Lydia, containing still her collourable kinde of impatience, and angerly frowning upon Nicostratus, steernely saide. If I may have my will, this villanous and deceiving tree, shall never more shame me, or any other woman: and therefore Pyrrhus, runne for an Axe, and by felling it to the ground, in an instant, revenge both thy wrong and mine. Doest not thou serve a worthy Lord? And have not I a wise Husband, who, without any consideration, will suffer the eye of his understanding to be so dazeled, with a foolish imagination beyond all possibility? For, although his eyes did apprehend such a folly, and it seemed to be a truth indeed: yet, in the depth of settled judgement, all the world should not perswade him, that it was so.

Pyrrhus had quickly brought the Axe, and hewing downe the tree, so soone as the Lady saw it fall; turning her selfe to Nicostratus, she said. Now that I have seene mine honour and honesties enemy laid along; mine anger is past, and Husband, I freely pardon you: intreating you heartily henceforward, not to presume or imagine, that my love eyther is, or can bee altdred from you.

Thus the mocked and derided Nicostratus, returned againe with his Lady and Pyrrhus; where perhaps (although the Peare-tree was cut downe) they could find as cunning meanes to over-reach him.

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Two Citizens of Siena, the one named Tingoccio Mini, and the other Meucio di Tura, affected both one woman, called Monna Mita, to whom the one of them was a Gossip. The Gossip dyed, and appeared afterward to his companion, according as he had formerly promised him to doe, and tolde him what strange wonders he had seene in the other world.

THE TENTH NOVELL

Wherein such men are covertly reprehended, who make no care or conscience at all of those things that should preserve them from sinne.

NOW there remained none but the King himselfe, last of all to recount his Novell; who, after hee heard the Ladies complaints indifferently pacified, for the rash felling downe of such a precious Peare-tree; thus he began. Faire Ladies, it is a case more then manifest, that every King, who will be accounted just and upright: should first of all, and rather then any other, observe those Lawes which he himselfe hath made; otherwise he ought to be reputed as a servant, worthy of punishment, and no King. Into which fault and reprehension, I your King, shall well neere be constrained to fall; for yesterday I enacted a Law, upon the forme of our discoursing, with full intent, that this day I would not use any part of my priviledge; but being subject (as you all are) to the same Law, I should speake of that argument, which already you have done.

Wherein, you have not onely performed more then I could wish, upon a subject so sutable to my minde: but in every Novell, such variety of excellent matter, such

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singular illustrations, and delicate eloquence hath flowne from you all; as I am utterly unable to invent any thing (notwithstanding the most curious search of my braine) apt or fit for the purpose, to paragon the meanest of them already related. And therefore seeing I must needs sinne in the Law established by my selfe; I tender my submission, as worthy of punishment, or what amends else you please to enjoyne mee. Now, as returned to my wonted priviledge, I say, that the Novell recounted by Madame Eliza, of the Fryar Godfather and his Gossip Agnesia, as also the sottishnesse of the Senese her Husband, hath wrought in me (worthy Ladies) to such effect; as, forbearing to speake any more of these wily prancks, which witty wives exercise on their simple Husbands; I am to tell you a pretty short Tale; which, though there is matter enough in it, not worthy the crediting, yet partly it will bee pleasing to heare.

Sometime there lived in Sienna two popular men; the one being named Tingoccio Mini, and the other Meucio de Tura; Men simple, and of no understanding, both of them dwelling in Porta Salaia. These two men lived in such familiar conversation together, and expressed such cordiall affection each to other, as they seldome walked asunder; but (as honest men use to doe) frequented Churches and Sermons, oftentimes hearing, both what miseries and beatitudes were in the world to come, according to the merits of their soules that were departed out of this life, and found their equall repaiment in the other. The manifold repetition of these matters, made them very earnestly desirous to know, by what meanes they might have tydings from thence, for their further confirmation. And finding all their endeavours utterly frustrated, they made a solemne vow and promise (each to other under oath) that hee which first dyed of them two, should returne backe againe (so soone as possibly he could) to the other remaining alive, and tell him such tydings as hee desired to heare.

After the promise was thus faithfully made, and they

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still keeping company, as they were wont to doe: It fortun'd, that Tingoccio became Gossip to one, named Ambrosio Anselmino, dwelling in Camporeggio, who by his wife, called Monna Mita, had a sweet and lovely Sonne. Tingoccio often resorting thither, and consorted with his companion Meucio; the she-Gossip, being a woman worthy the loving, faire and comely of her person: Tingoccio, notwithstanding the Gossipship betweene them, had more then a moneths minde to his Godchilds Mother. Meucio also fell sicke of the same disease, because shee seemed pleasing in his eye, and Tingoccio gave her no meane commendations; yet, carefully they concealed their love to themselves, but not for one and the same occasion. Because Tingoccio kept it closely from Meucio, lest he should hold it disgracefull in him, to beare amorous affection to his Gossip, and thought it unfitting to bee knowne. But Meucio had no such meaning, for hee knew well enough that Tingoccio loved her, and therefore conceived in his minde, that if he discovered any such matter to him: He will (quoth he) be jealous of me, and being her Gossip (which admitteth his conference with her when himselfe pleaseth; he may easily make her to distaste me, and therefore I must rest contented as I am.

Their love continuing on still in this kinde, Tingoccio proved so fortunate in the businesse, that having better meanes then his companion, and more prevayling courses, when, where, and how to Court his Mistresse, which seemed to forward him effectually. All which Meucio plainly perceived, and though it was tedious and wearisome to him, yet hoping to finde some successe at length: he would not take notice of any thing, as fearing to infringe the amity betweene him and Tingoccio, and so his hope to be quite supplanted. Thus the one triumphing in his loves happiness, and the other hoping for his felicity to come; a lingering sicknesse seized on Tingoccio, which brought him to so low a condition, as at the length he dyed.

About some three or foure nights after, Meucio being fast asleepe in his bed, the ghoste of Tingoccio appeared to

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him, and called so loude, that Meucio awaking, demanded who called him? I am thy friend Tingoccio, replied the ghoste, who according to my former promise made, am come again in vision to thee, to tell thee tidings out of the nether world. Meucio was a while somewhat amazed: but, recollecting his more manly spirits together, boldly he said. My brother and friend, thou art heartily welcome: but I thought thou hadst beene utterly lost. Those things (quoth Tingoccio) are lost, which cannot be recovered againe, and if I were lost, how could I then be heere with thee? Alas Tingoccio, replied Meucio, my meaning is not so: but I would be resolved, whether thou art among the damned soules, in the painefull fire of hell torments, or no? No (quoth Tingoccio) I am not sent thither, but for divers sinnes by mee committed I am to suffer very great and grievous paines. Then Meucio demaunded particularly, the punishments inflicted there, for the severall sinnes committed heere: Wherein Tingoccio fully resolved him. And upon further question, what hee would have to be done for him here, made answer, That Meucio should cause Masses, Prayers and Almes-deeds to be performed for him, which (he said) were very helpfull to the soules abiding there, and Meucio promised to see them done.

As the ghost was offering to depart, Meucio remembered Tingoccioes Gossip Monna Mita, and raysing himselfe higher upon his pillowe, said. My memorie informeth me friend Tingoccio, of your kinde Gossip Monna Mita, with whom (when you remained in this life) I knew you to be very familiar: let me intreat you then to tell me, what punishment is inflicted on you there, for that wanton sinne committed heere? Oh Brother Meucio, answered Tingoccio, so soone as my soule was landed there, one came immediately to me, who seemed to know all mine offences readily by heart, and forthwith commanded, that I should depart thence into a certaine place, where I must weepe for my sinnes in very grievous paines. There I found more of my companions, condemned to the same punishment as I was, and being among them, I called to minde some wanton

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dalliances, which had passed betweene my Gossip and me, and expecting therefore farre greater afflictions, then as yet I felt (although I was in a huge fire, and exceedingly hot) yet with conceite of feare, I quaked and trembled wondrously.

One of my other Consorts being by me, and perceiving in what an extreame agony I was; presently said unto me. My friend, what hast thou done more, then any of us here condemned with thee, that thou tremblest and quakest, being in so hot a fire? Oh my friend (quoth I) I am in feare of a greater judgement then this, for a grievous offence by mee heretofore committed while I lived. Then hee demaunded of mee what offence it was, whereto thus I answered. It was my chance in the other world, to be God-father at a childs Christning, and afterward I grew so affectionate to the childs mother, as (indeed) I kissed her twice or thrise. My companyon laughing at me in mocking manner, replyed thus. Goe like an Asse as thou art, and be no more afraid hereafter, for here is no punishment inflicted, in any kinde whatsoever, for such offences of frailty committed, especially with Gossips, as I my selfe can witnesse.

Now day drew on, and the Cockes began to crow, a dreadfull hearing to walking spirits, when Tingoccio said to Meucio. Farewell my friendly companion, for I may tarry no longer with thee, and instantly hee vanished away. Meucio having heard this confession of his friend, and verily beleaving it for a truth, that no punishment was to be inflicted in the future world, for offences of frailty in this life, and chiefly with Gossips: began to condemne his owne folly, having bin a Gossip to many wives, yet modesty restrained him from such familiar offending. And therefore being sorry for this grosse ignorance, hee made a vowe to be wiser hereafter. And if Fryar Reynard had been acquainted with this kind of shrift (as doubtlesse he was, though his Gossip Agnesia knew it not) he needed no such Syllogismes, as he put in practise, when he converted her to his lustfull knavery, in the comparison of kinred by him

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moved, concerning her husband, the childe and himselfe. But, these are the best fruits of such Fryerly Confessions, to compasse the issue of their inordinate appetites; yet clouded with the cloake of Religion, which hath beene the overthrow of too many.

By this time the gentle blast of Zephirus began to blow, because the Sunne grew neere his setting, wherewith the King concluded his Novell, and none remaining more to be thus employed: taking the Crowne from off his owne head, he placed it on Madame Laurettaes, saying, Madame, I Crowne you with your owne Crowne, as Queene of our Company. You shall henceforth command as Lady and Mistresse, in such occasions as shall be to your liking, and for the contentment of us all; With which words he set him downe. And Madame Lauretta being now created Queene, shee caused the Master of the houshold to bee called, to whom she gave command, that the Tables should be prepared in the pleasant vally, but at a more convenient houre, then formerly had beene, because they might (with better ease) returne backe to the Pallace. Then shee tooke order likewise, for all such other necessary matters, as should bee required in the time of her Regiment: and then turning her selfe to the whole Company, she began in this manner.

It was the Will of Dioneus yesternight, that our discourses for this day, should concerne the deceits of wives to their Husbands. And were it not to avoyde taxation, of a spleenitive desire to be revenged, like the dog being bitten, biteth againe: I could command our to morrows conference, to touch mens treacheries towards their wives. But because I am free from any such fiery humor, let it be your generall consideration, to speake of such queint beguylings, as have heretofore past, either of the woman to the man, the man to the woman, or of one man to another: and I am of opinion, that they will yeeld us no lesse delight, then those related (this day) have done. When she had thus spoken, she rose; granting them all liberty, to goe recreate themselves untill Supper time.

The Ladies being thus at their owne disposing, some of

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them bared their legges and feete, to wash them in the coole current. Others, not so minded, walked on the greene grasse, and under the goodly spreading trees. Dioneus and Madame Fiammetta, they sate singing together, the love-warre betweene Arcit and Palemon. And thus with diversity of disports, in choice delight and much contentment, all were imployed, till Supper drew neere. When the houre was come, and the Tables covered by the Ponds side: we need not question their dyet and dainties, infinite Birds sweetly singing about them, as no musicke in the world could be more pleasing; beside calme windes, fanning their faces from the neighbouring hilles (free from flies, or the least annoyance) made a delicate addition to their pleasure.

No sooner were the Tables withdrawne, and all risen: but they fetcht a few turnings about the vally, because the Sunne was not (as yet) quite set. Then in the coole evening, according to the Queenes appointment: in a soft and gentle pace, they walked homeward: devising on a thousand occasions, as well those which the dayes discourses had yeelded, as others of their owne inventing beside. It was almost darke night, before they arrived at the Pallace; where, with variety of choice Wines, and abounding plenty of rare Banquetting, they out wore the little toile and wearinesse, which the long walke had charged them withall. Afterward, according to their wonted order, the Instruments being brought and played on, they fell to dancing about the faire Fountaine; Tindaro intruding (now and then) the sound of his Bagpipe, to make the musicke seeme more melodious. But in the end, the Queene commanded Madame Philomena to sing; whereupon the Instruments being tuned fit for the purpose, thus she began.

THE SONG

THE CHORUS SUNG BY THE WHOLE COMPANY

Wearisome is my life to me,
Because I cannot once againe returne;
Unto the place which made me first to mourne.

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Nothing I know, yet feele a powerfull fire,
 Burning within my brest,
 Through deepe desire ;
To be once more where first I felt unrest,
 Which cannot be exprest.
O my sole good ! O my best happinesse !
 Why am I thus restrainde ?
Is there no comfort in this wretchednesse ?
Then let me live content, to be thus painde.
 Wearisome is my life to me, etc.

I cannot tell what was that rare delight,
 Which first enflamde my soule,
 And gave command in spight,
That I should find no ease by day or night,
 But still live in controule.
I see, I heare, and feele a kinde of blisse,
 Yet find no forme at all :
Other in their desire, feele blessednesse,
But I have none, nor thinke I ever shall.
 Wearisome is my life to me, etc.

Tell me, if I may hope in following dayes,
 To have but one poore sight,
 Of those bright Sunny rayes,
Dazeling my sence, did o'recome me quite,
 Bequeath'd to wandring wayes.
If I be poasted off, and may not prove,
 To have the smallest grace :
Or but to know, that this proceeds from love,
Why should I live despise in every place ?
 Wearisome is my life to me, etc.

Me thinkes milde favour whispers in mine eare,
 And bids me not despaire ;
 There will a time appeare
To quell and quite confound consuming care,
 And joy surmount proud feare.
In hope that gracious time will come at length,
 To cheare my long dismay :
My spirits reassume your former strength,
And never dread to see that joyfull day.
 Wearisome is my life to me,
Because I cannot once againe returne ;
Unto the place which made me first to mourne.

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This Song gave occasion to the whole Company, to imagine, that some new and pleasing apprehension of Love, constrained Madame Philomena to sing in this manner. And because (by the discourse thereof) it plainly appeared, that shee had felt more then shee saw, shee was so much the more happy, and the like was wished by all the rest. Wherefore, after the Song was ended; the Queene remembring, that the next day following was Friday, turning her selfe graciously to them all, thus she spake.

You know noble Ladies, and you likewise most noble Gentlemen, that to morrow is the day consecrated to the Passion of our blessed Lord and Saviour, which (if you have not forgotten it, as easily you cannot) we devoutly celebrated, Madame Neiphila being then Queene, ceasing from all our pleasant discoursing, as we did the like on the Saturday following, sanctifying the sacred Sabbath, in due regard of it selfe. Wherefore, being desirous to imitate precedent good example, which in worthy manner shee began to us all: I hold it very decent and necessary, that we should abstaine to morrow, and the day ensuing, from recounting any of our pleasant Novels, reducing to our memories, what was done (as on those dayes) for the salvation of our soules. This holy and Religious motion made by the Queene, was commendably allowed by all the assembly, and therefore, humbly taking their leave of her, and an indifferent part of the night being already spent; severally they betooke themselves to their Chambers.

THE END OF THE SEAVENTH DAY

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